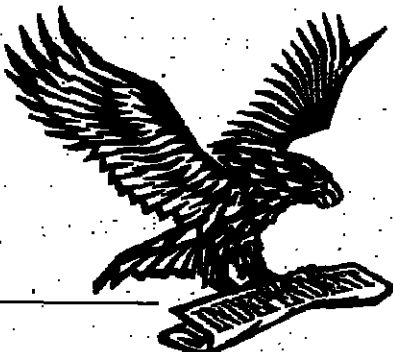


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THURSDAY 29 JUNE 1996

John Walsh:
The art of the shrink
Section Two, page 5



Clinton vows revenge after truck bomb kills 19 US servicemen in Saudi Arabia

DEATH IN DHAHRAN

Latest reports and analysis from Washington and the Middle East on pages 10 and 11

THE INDEPENDENT

3,024

THURSDAY 27 JUNE 1996

WEATHER: Cloudy early on, brighter later

40p (inc 45p)

Euro-sceptics give Major a final chance

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Tory Euro-sceptics have called off the dogs of war to give John Major a free run through to the election, giving a much-needed fillip to the Prime Minister.

That election is expected to be held next May, when the impact of tax cuts and improved economic prospects will have sunk in, according to Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in an exclusive interview with the Independent today.

One leading sceptic said last night that private doubt remained just as strong - but they had decided to maintain a public face of unity through to the election. The MP, one of the "Westminster Eight", the MPs who were stripped of the party whip after voting against the Government in November 1994, said they had agreed to back away from further confrontation because that could only help Labour and Tony Blair would be far more pro-European than Mr Major.

One Cabinet minister welcomed the decision, but he added: "The damage is already done."

Another Cabinet source said it had been left a little late in the day, but Mr Clarke says in his interview that the polls on economic competence were improving quite rapidly in the Government's favour.

That view was bolstered by a MORI poll for the Times showing a three-point swing to the Tories since late May. The poll, taken between 21-24 June, showed an increase of four percentage points, to 31 per cent, in Conservative support, compared with May, while Labour dropped two points to 52 per cent, and the Liberal

Democrats were down three points to 12 per cent.

Mr Clarke said the impact of tax cuts had only come into play over the past two months, adding: "If you can maintain that for 12 months..."

That would clearly indicate a May election next year - and not the snap autumn election that has been predicted in some quarters. Mr Clarke said: "The policies have been set to continue the present improvement

The constitution debate

John Major, Jack Straw and Paddy Ashdown set out the party agendas - page 6

in the economic situation for some years, which I hope means we will be [a] slightly more popular government than we have been at times."

The Prime Minister had told him he would remain Chancellor through to the next election, and Mr Clarke added: "I was quite interested in what conditions might be like in late 1996 and early 1997, and I think it looks like a pretty good combination of circumstances coming up for late 1996 and early 1997."

The Euro-sceptic decision to back away from further confrontation follows two recent votes on backbench Bills, which were portrayed as humiliating setbacks for party unity. In April, 66 Tory backbenchers backed a call by Ian Duncan-Smith for curbs on the power of the European Court of Justice, and on 11 June, the total number of rebels rose to 78 on Bill Cash's Commons call for a referendum - with a dozen known sceptics missing from the vote.

One rebel said that with a total tally of about 90 sceptics - amounting to about half the Government's backbench strength in the Commons - they could bide their time until after the next election.

The common view among right-wing Tory MPs is that the party will suffer badly at the next election, with one former Cabinet minister talking of a halving of the number of MPs, to about 160 MPs.

Mr Major has repeatedly warned, at every opportunity, of the need for an end to damaging splits. He told this month's Welsh Conservative Party conference that he had had a "bellyful" of party strife. The Independent's sources have said that the informal peace pact was agreed over the past week at a variety of meetings of groups, including the sceptics.

While the first sign of a back-down came last week with Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor, talking of the need to "knuckle down" in the run-up to the election, the most significant evidence of a change of atmosphere was delivered in the Commons on Monday, when Tory MPs united behind Mr Major's Commons statement on the Florence beef deal.

One former dissident said it was a matter of common sense that if half a dozen MPs had attacked the deal - as they would have done in normal circumstances - the party would have "imploded". He said that the Prime Minister's credibility would have been destroyed, and his claim of victory would have been exposed for what it was: an empty claim.

- Kenneth Clarke interview, page 16

England pay a bitter penalty

STEVE BOGGAN

England's 30-year jinx against Germany continued last night when they were knocked out of the semi-finals of Euro 96 in a nerve-racking re-run of the 1990 World Cup semi-final.

It was a heroic effort from England, who were the better side over 90 minutes and thirty minutes of sudden-death extra time. But, just as they did in 1990, they lost in an agonising penalty shoot-out.

Both teams scored their first five penalties but Gareth Southgate, one of the stalwarts of the campaign, missed England's sixth. There were no recriminations, only thanks for a team that gave us more joy and hope than we deserved.

It had been heart-stopping stuff. After 90 minutes - the first half dominated by the Germans, despite a third-minute England goal, the second half by England - the game went into extra time. With the new first-goal-wins rule, England came close to winning when Darren Anderton struck a post. Then the Germans had a shot saved and a goal disallowed. Most frustrating of all, Paul Gascoigne, hero of millions of England fans, failed to tap in a winner.

The frenzy had been building up all day. As early as 1pm, fans decked in the flag of St George began gathering in Trafalgar Square in London, finding occasional respite from the sun by wading in the fountains.

Many employers joined in the Europhoria by allowing workers to finish work early, start late or take regular breaks in front of television sets. Carmakers Nissan allowed 1,350 nightshift workers at its Sunderland factory to start work an hour later than normal at 9.45 pm.

And, at German-owned Siemens electronics factory in Walsend, German and English staff overcame the xenophobia whipped up in the tabloid media to hold a barbecue at their boss's home. "There was a good atmosphere of friendly rivalry," said a spokesman.

Roads out of London began clogging up mid-afternoon as fans took the opportunity to leave work early, eat early and get together with friends. With a London Underground strike due today, one personnel manager said: "It's the ideal time for people to work up a hangover and then say they can't get into work. I've got a feeling the weekend is starting early."

For those wanting to see the game at Wembley, tickets were like gold dust, with touts asking - and getting - £300 for £50 seats. One man who did not get to see the game at Wembley was Wolfgang Kiehn, 36, from Venlo on the Dutch-German border. He was arrested by police after being caught with 330 tickets he was offering on the black market for £200 each.

Those of us without a ticket had to be contented with watching the occasion on television. Early estimates pointed to a record football audience tuning in - that would mean more than the 25.21m who watched the July 1990 World Cup semi-final between England and West Germany.

In comparison, the viewing figures for the Princess of Wales's Panorama interview were 22.8m.



Before the game, Ladbrokes had England at 5-6 to win, hedged its bets with similar odds on Germany.

In all the excitement, there was one man who calmly put the event into perspective.

George Barlow, 39, of Wetherby, West Yorkshire, recently underwent a two-hour operation to donate bone marrow to an anonymous German leukaemia victim.

"Borders and nationalities don't count for a thing in a situation like this," he said. "That's just football, this is serious."

Betting madness, page 18
Full reports, pages 26-28



Broken dreams: Paul Gascoigne feels the pain of defeat Photograph: Darren Walsh/Action Images

First the gangsters beat her. Then they used guns to threaten her and wound her. Finally, they had to kill Veronica Guerin to stop her telling their story

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

Veronica Guerin was an Irish journalist who would let nothing get between her and her story. The drug dealers and terrorists she exposed here tried beating her into submission. Then they used guns - first to warn and then to wound her. She would not be cowed. So yesterday they killed her.

Ms Guerin, 36, one of Ireland's best-known journalists, was shot six times at close range by two gunmen on a motorcycle who ambushed her car at traffic lights in Clondalkin, a western suburb of Dublin.

It was the second time in 18 months she had been shot. The first attack took place in January last year at her north Dublin home when she was wounded in the leg. As in yesterday's shooting, the gunman wore a crash helmet.

Three months before that, warning shots were fired through her front window. Dublin's lowlife wanted her to stop publicising their business. Her response was to root deeper into their secrets and put them in print.

Last weekend Ms Guerin, crime correspondent with the Sunday Independent, wrote a shocking account of the life of one of Dublin's most notorious heroin dealers: Tony Felloni, known to gardai and media as "King Scum". She told how he introduced his own daughter, now an Aids victim, to the drug, and also tried to poison his wife, Anne, whom he repeatedly and savagely battered. Felloni was jailed last week for 20 years.

In the same issue she also wrote extensively on the IRA's killing of a gardai detective in Adare, Co Limerick, earlier this month. She reported that an abortive raid on a postal delivery truck had been sanctioned by the Dublin-based operations director of the IRA's southern command.

Mother to a five-year-old son, she had been warned by friends and colleagues that she would again be a target because



Veronica Guerin: Her murder was 'the ultimate attack on free speech'

of her unfinching and minutely detailed coverage of the principal gang leaders in the city.

Despite widespread knowledge of her dangerous work and previous threats to her life, her death yesterday stunned Ireland - all other news items were dropped from bulletins. The Daily paid tribute with a minute's silence.

Irish government sources do not be-

lieve the IRA would have shot her. It is widely believed the order to kill her was given by one of the dozen senior organised crime figures she had followed assiduously over the past five years.

An accountant by training, Ms Guerin entered journalism late, at the age of 30, after working in business and public relations. Nevertheless, last December she received an international press freedom

award from the Committee to Protect Journalists at a ceremony in New York.

Her research was minute. In covering frauds she went to South Africa and Nigeria to pursue key figures in her stories. She wrote at first for the Sunday Business Post and was for a time based in the Independent's Dublin office. She later moved to the Sunday Tribune and RTE television, before becoming the crime correspondent of the Sunday Independent.

She reported Dublin's pivotal position in drug trafficking in Ireland which has become a major problem for police and social services and will be a major focus when Ireland assumes the presidency of the European Union next week.

Drug pushers have become so pervasive in some sections of the capital and major cities that parents have formed vigilante gangs to keep them away. Last month, a vigilante gang beat a suspected pusher to death.

The ruthlessness of the attack and Ms Guerin's high-level connections mean the killing will inevitably prompt a wholesale review of organised crime policing in the Irish capital. Ms Guerin appeared frequently on Irish television and radio debates and as a commentator on crime.

Her employer for the last three years, Tony O'Reilly's Independent Newspapers, had offered her 24-hour protection after last year's shooting, which followed detailed reporting by her of the gang blamed for the largest cash robbery in the history of the Irish state six days earlier. A few months before she had been badly beaten when she went to question a suspected drugs wholesaler at his home outside Dublin. She was unfazed by the beating as she had been by previous death threats.

Aengus Fanning, editor of the Sunday Independent, summed up widespread feeling yesterday when he described her murder as "the ultimate attack on freedom of speech".

Obituary, page 14

QUICKLY

Suffer the children
Rows, abuse and family breakdown are the major factors driving children, some as young as 12, out on the streets, according to a new report. Page 5

No judicial reform
Large-scale reform of the system for appointing judges has been ruled out despite continuing evidence that women and racial minorities are markedly under-represented. Page 8

Amis memorabilia
Sir Kingsley Amis's library - more than 1,600 books, many covered with scribbles of criticism or praise - comes up for auction next month, together with his typewriter, desk and armchair. Page 9

Beautiful obsession
There is no peace for the ugly. They are less likely to find success, mates and happiness, and are more likely to be blamed for mishaps and crimes, in a world more obsessed by beauty than the Greeks. Page 3

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MATCH POINT



OPENING SERVICE

WIMBLEDON TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS	24 June - 7 July
ROUND THE ISLAND RACE, ILL OF WHITNEY	29 June
VEQUE CLICQUOT GOLD CUP PAIR, GOWAN PARK	29 June - 31 July
ROYAL RUGBY LEAGUE	5-7 July
ST JOHN'S HALL MATCH, LAMBLE, TRENT BRIDGE	4-9 July
HARTFORD COURT PALACE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER SHOW	9-14 July
BREITING GRASS PAIN, SEVENSTONE	14 July
GILBERTON GOLF COURSE	30 July - 5 August
COWLES WEEK	3-10 August
SUN CITY & DART, HILVERDALE	15-18 August

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news

Man confessed to killing Sophie



Helpless: Murder victim Sophie Hook

Jobless gardener Howard Hughes confessed to his father that he raped and murdered seven-year-old Sophie Hook, who was snatched as she slept in a tent in the garden of her uncle's home, a court was told yesterday.

Hughes told his father: "I did it dad. I must tell somebody." Mr Gerald Elias QC, told a jury at Chester Crown Court.

Hughes made the confession to his father when he was in custody, on August 3, four days after the Saturday morning on which Sophie was abducted, raped, murdered and her body was dumped in the sea at Llandudno, the jury was told.

In the past, Mr Hughes had boasted to friends of his liking for young girls, Mr Elias said, and on the day before Sophie's murder had tried to

abduct another child of about the same age.

"He was bent on taking and using a young girl for his own sexual purposes. It was a fantasy of his which, horrifically, he was to bring to reality."

"He had boasted to a friend in the past of his liking for girls of four or five and his wish to abduct, sexually assault, and murder a young girl."

Hughes, 31, of Yerburch Avenue, Colwyn Bay, North Wales, denies murdering Sophie, and two charges of raping her, on 30 July last year.

Mr Elias said Hughes had told his father: "On Saturday afternoon I went into the back garden. I went back at about two in the morning. I persuaded a girl to go with me down to the beach."

"Dad, I have been sexually frustrated since 1990. The girl started to scream and I put my hand over her mouth and kept it there until she stopped. I took all her clothes off and threw her body into the sea."

Mr Hughes allegedly went on to describe to his father where he hid Sophie's clothes, which were later found in a bush beside a lane along which Mr Hughes would have travelled on his way back from Llandudno.

Mr Elias said Sophie, who lived in Cheshire with her parents, two sisters and brother, was taken from the tent in the back garden of her uncle's home in Llandudno as she slept there with her sister and a cousin after the "end of a perfect day" of family celebration.

"She was taken from the garden and subjected to the most appalling violent physical and sexual assaults. She was then manually strangled and her body thrown into the nearby sea," Mr Elias said.

The "depth of depravity" with which the crimes were committed "almost defies belief", he continued, adding that she was probably dead when her body was dumped in the sea. "She was 4ft 1in and weighed 28kg, 62lb - a seven-year-old helpless in the face of an attack of this savagery," Mr Elias said.

"Unhappily the assaults on her - both physical and sexual - would have taken place when she was alive, although her state of consciousness can only be guessed at."

The case continues today.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Nearly 300 Royal Opera House backstage staff will be made redundant when its building in Covent Garden, central London, closes for redevelopment next year, it was revealed yesterday. Announcing its plans for the two seasons that the house will be closed after July 1997, the ROH said the Royal Opera would perform at a range of London venues including the Barbican Centre and the Royal Albert Hall, while the Royal Ballet will perform at the Royal Festival Hall and London Coliseum. The ballet company will also tour, both in Britain and internationally. Jobs will be reduced from 820 to 500, with staff being offered enhanced redundancy pay and first consideration for new posts when the ROH reopens. Sir Jeremy Isaacs, general director, said: "I very much regret that the very different programme means we cannot keep all our staff with us during closure." David Lister

Class sizes in schools have risen as a result of falling cuts which led to the loss of 9,000 teachers last year, teaching unions said yesterday. In January this year, 1.28 million primary school children were in classes of more than 30, a rise of 120,000 on the previous year's figure, according to figures published by the Department for Education and Employment. There was also a 17 per cent increase in the number of children in classes of more than 35 to a total of 130,000. The average primary class size rose from 27.1 to 27.3 children. In secondary schools, there was an increase of 33,600 in the number of children in classes over 30, taking the average class size to 21.6 pupils. Fran Abrams

The liquidation of Easair Airways, whose aircraft has twice recently been the subject of safety scares, was announced yesterday. Set up in 1992, the airline employed 180 staff and operated out of Gatwick, Manchester and East Midlands airports. Earlier this month 91 passengers refused to board a DC10 in Orlando, Florida, in the United States, after they saw smoke coming from the aircraft. Last weekend 350 passengers had refused to board the same plane in Orlando after a catalogue of problems ended with the pilot slamming on the brakes as the jet reached top speed before take-off. Liquidators Deloitte and Touche said there had been a "loss of customer confidence" after the "sensationalised" media coverage of the two incidents.

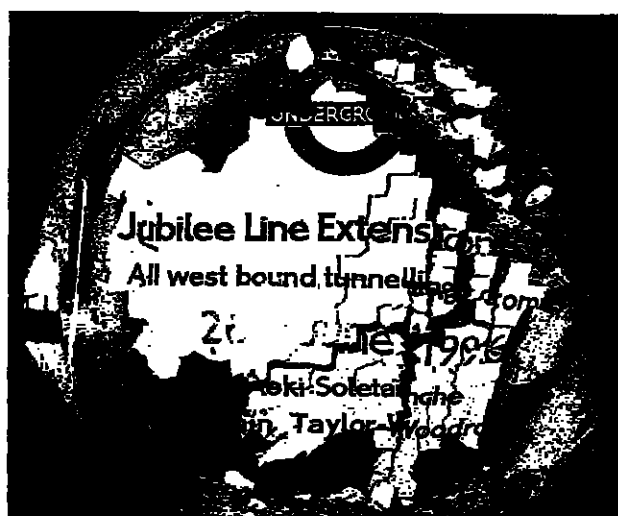
The number of patients compulsorily detained under the Mental Health Act has shown a spectacular rise, it was revealed yesterday by the Department of Health. In the five years to 1994/95, the number formally admitted rose by 55 per cent to 27,100. The number of informal admissions to mental hospitals also rose dramatically, up 29 per cent to 308,006. The figures reflected "the crisis in the mental health services", Dr David Roy, a consultant psychiatrist and spokesman for the NHS Trust Federation, said, demonstrating the higher level of disturbance and extreme pressure on acute mental illness wards. Mind, the mental health charity, said they showed that "too little too late" at being offered people in mental distress "with appropriate mental health services being caused by underfunding of community care services." Nicholas Timmins

A man who was charged with the killing of a woman was jailed for 18 months yesterday. Ray Lee, 30, was charged with the manslaughter of Philip Walters, who was shot dead after he was called to deal with a disturbance at a home in Hove, east London, in April last year. Judge Ann Goddard recommended that Lee, 30, who was sentenced to eight years for the incident in the house and 18 months for the manslaughter, should be deported at the end of his sentence. Police said they believed he came from Jamaica but they did not know his real identity. PC Walters had joined the Metropolitan Police 18 months earlier.

The Clifton inquiry into the Dunblane massacre was yesterday read a statement in which it was alleged that a 12-year-old boy, "torn with fear" during a sex attack at the hands of Thomas Hamilton, who killed 16 children and one teacher at the primary school last March. The statement by the alleged victim, who is now an adult, described a sexual assault during a boys' club boating holiday on Loch Lomond in the Eighties. Crown counsel said the inquiry in Stirling that the person was unwilling to be identified and some "peripheral" matters in his statement could not be corroborated.

The Prince and Princess of Wales's final settlement will be the subject of a statement by the Prime Minister to MPs. It was signalled yesterday by Downing Street. John Major met the Princess of Wales on Monday to discuss her proposals for a role as an ambassador for Britain. Foreign Office sources are opposed to her being given any diplomatic role. It was unclear last night when the settlement would be reached but the Prime Minister will have to clarify the Princess's constitutional position. Colin Brown

Capital transport: Industrial relations look backwards but new line puts future on track



Strike will bring Tube to a halt

BARRIE CLEMENT
Labour Editor

The Tube network in London will be at a virtual standstill today as drivers walk out on a 24-hour stoppage, just as a landmark reached in the boring for the Jubilee Line extension yesterday means there is now a continuous tunnel between Green Park in the west and Canning Town in the east.

The Tube action coincides with a second national post strike which begins at noon. To add to the industrial unrest, leaders of 900,000 nurses and other health workers yesterday threatened industrial action and warned that the National Health Service pay system was in danger of collapse.

The Tube management was warned that a second union could be taking action over working conditions. But at the Royal Mail hopes of a settlement rose. Contrary to expectation the postal executive of the Communication Workers' Union refrained from naming further dates for strikes following today's action. A letter from management led to hopes that the Post Office would not be dogmatic in its pursuit of "team-working" - the issue at the centre of the dispute.

In the NHS, the public service union Unison yesterday warned that its branches would be given authority to hold strike ballots after 31 July unless management made pay offers. Bob Abberley, head of health at Unison, said that only 150 out of 680 employers in the NHS had agreed to top up the national wage deal of 2 per cent.

Unions lead by Unison last year agreed to a system whereby national pay increases would be enhanced through local negotiation. Mr Abberley said that Unison members felt "angry and betrayed" that so few employers had honoured the agreement.

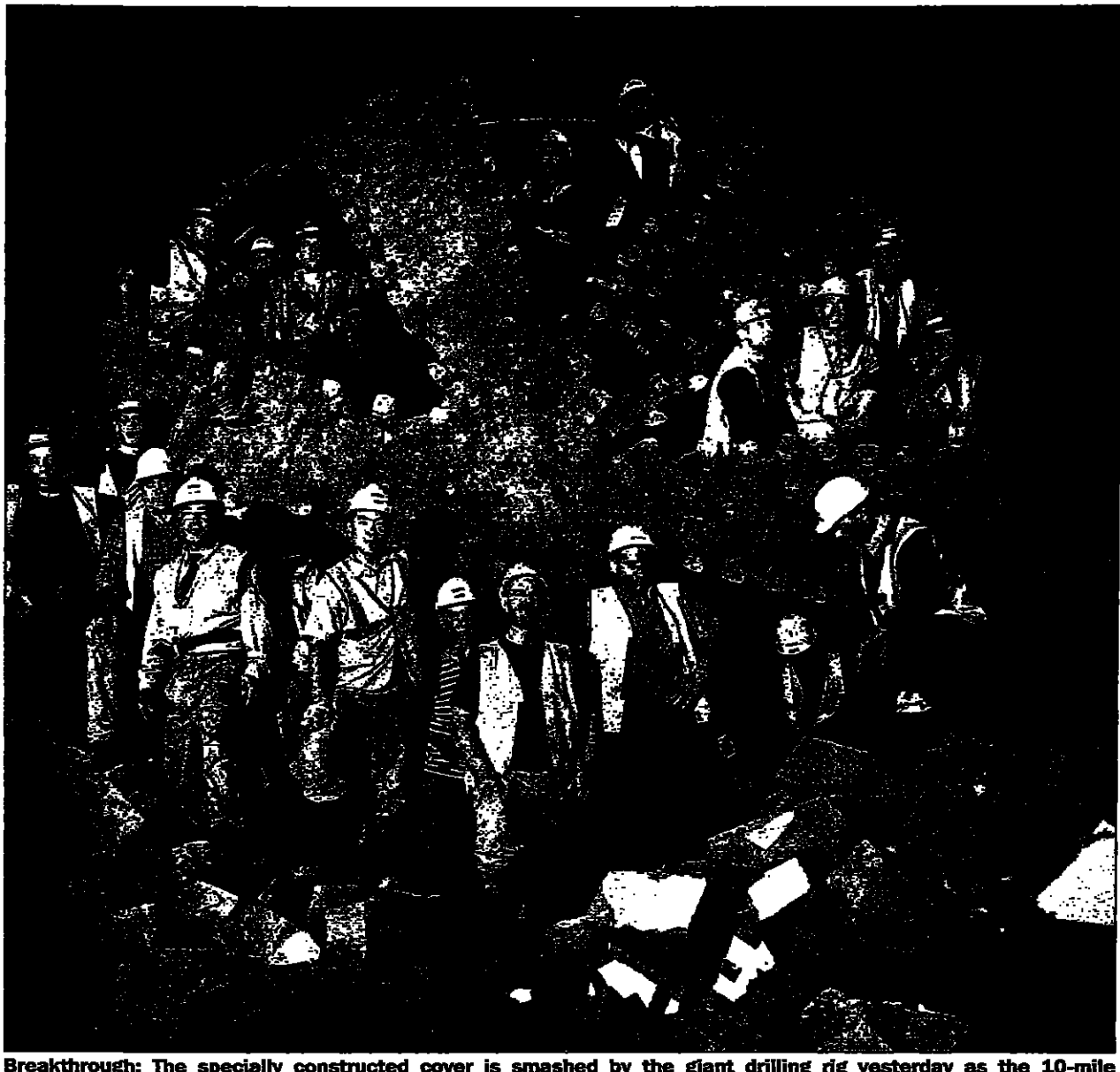
He said that so far, in spite of a 6.5 per cent pay claim, employers had refused to make any substantial additions, and called on Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, and the NHS executive to intervene.

One-third of the offers were for up to 0.7 per cent. A further 60 per cent gave up to 1.25 per cent locally and just 5 per cent offered top up of 1.25 per cent or more, but many involved productivity agreements. Only a handful of deals had so far been accepted.

Mr Abberley said there were a number of reasons for the delay in local agreements. In many cases the "health-purchasing" authorities had not agreed budgets with employers and a number of organisations were simply incapable of negotiating pay.

The Unison official pointed out that the NHS pay review body early this year calculated that a rise of 3.9 per cent had already been built into budgets. He pointed that under last year's agreement negotiations were due to begin in September to uprate national pay next year on the basis of local settlements this year. He argued that there would be few such settlements on which to base the calculations.

At London Underground the Rail, Maritime and Transport



Breakthrough: The specially constructed cover is smashed by the giant drilling rig yesterday as the 10-mile Jubilee Line link between Green Park and Canning Town in east London is completed. Photographs: Brian Harris

workers' union announced that it was to ballot all 6,000 Tube members on a series of one-day strikes in pursuit of a claim for shorter working hours.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the RMT, said it was seeking an extra five days holiday for its members and that it would co-ordinate action with Aslef, the train drivers' union. After today's stoppage Aslef intends to bring its London Underground members out for

24-hour strikes next Wednesday and on 8 and 16 July.

Management at London Underground yesterday said they were disappointed with an offer to convene talks under the industry's wages board - the next level of negotiation. The drivers' union said that its executive would be unable to discuss the matter until tomorrow.

Meanwhile, a specially constructed cover was broken by a giant 150ton tunnel-boring machine yesterday to mark the breakthrough of the tunnelling for the Jubilee Line extension. Only one out of the four tunnel-boring machines has not yet completed its task and it is expected to reach Canada Water in Docklands by the end of August.

The £2bn project for the 10-mile line from Green Park to Stratford in east London is over-budget, but yesterday Hugh Doherty, the project director, said it was on schedule for opening at the end of March 1998.

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Canada	£600	Portugal	£425
Czech Rep.	£520	Romania	£400
Denmark	£610	Spain	£500
France	£610	Sweden	£625
Germany	£610	Switzerland	£640
Greece	£450	USA	£3.00
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سكنا من الاله

Buyers wise to shop around as CD prices hit new high

DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

Compact disc prices for rock and pop albums are creeping up again, with music buyers being charged radically different prices at neighbouring high street stores.

The variations in price can be dramatic. A copy of *Abbey Road* by the Beatles sells at £15.99 in Smiths and Woolworths and at £10.99 in Our Price. Bruce Springsteen's *Born in the USA* sells for £15.49 in Tower Records, £14.99 in WH Smith, £11.99 in Woolworths and at £10.99 in HMV.

Even current chart albums, usually more consistently priced than back catalogue albums, show variations. Gabrielle's new album entitled *Gabrielle* sells for £11.99 in WH Smith and £13.99 in Our Price.

A survey of all the major music stores by *Music Week* magazine, the trade journal of the music industry, shows that the

current average price for a CD chart artist album is £13.33, a rise of £1.22 in just over a year. The price of back catalogue albums has also risen across the board with a current average of £13.85. Current dealer prices (the price the retailer has to pay the record company) are £8.60 per album.

Retailers told *Music Week* they were confident that customers are quite prepared to pay more than £12.99 for an album.

Consequently, £12.99 is the most common price, but there has been a sharp rise in albums priced £13.99. The £9.99 price, which used to be the boast of stores such as Woolworths and WH Smith, has all but disappeared.

HMV's head of rock and pop, Jonathan Rees, said: "People don't have a problem paying £13.99 for a new George Michael. Everything But The Girl or Def Leppard album these days. The strength of

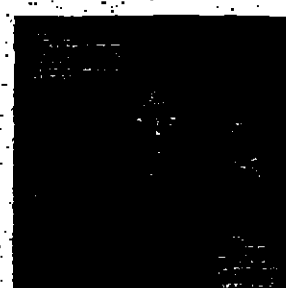
Pounds apart: Why comparing costs is worthwhile



Abbey Road: The Beatles
WH Smith £15.99; Woolworth £15.99; Tower £15.49; HMV £15.99; Virgin £15.99; Our Price £10.99



Destination: Gloria Estefan
WH Smith £12.99; Woolworth £13.99; Tower £11.99; HMV £13.99; Virgin £13.49; Our Price £13.49



The Score: Fugees
WH Smith £9.99 (special promotion by record company); Woolworth £13.49; Tower £12.99; HMV £10.99; Virgin £13.49; Our Price £13.99

fluctuation than albums across the stores. They range from 99p to £4.99. Cassette singles are more stable at an average price of £2.29, while vinyl, where it is stocked, ranges from 99p for a seven-inch single to £4.99 for a 12-inch.

The prices of classical CDs (not included in the *Music Week* survey) have not risen in line with rock and pop albums: £14.99 is the average high street price for new releases, a price that has not changed for two years.

But the classical market is even more complex than the pop market because of the large number of high quality cheap discs on offer. While new releases are £14.99, most recordings from the Sixties and Seventies are "mid price", retailing at around £9.99.

The real challenge to the market, however, has come from the budget price labels. Naxos has literally hundreds of albums retailing at £4.99. While

aficionados initially scorned the concept of budget price classical music, it is now recognised that many of these recordings - particularly of early music, choral and chamber music, are of an extremely high quality and have been praised in *Gramophone* magazine.

Naxos recently scooped all its rivals in releasing the premiere recording of Malcolm Arnold's ninth symphony.

The classical market remains as keen on new marketing plays as it was in the Nigel Kennedy days of the late Eighties. Nimbus has a £5.99 CD selling at HMV called *Three Legendary Tenors*. Taking advantage of The Three Tenors appearance in Britain, it features three illustrious tenors of old: Gigli, Caruso and Bjorling.

Tony Shaw, classical buyer for HMV, said: "It is now the case that in many areas there are very cheap recordings are every bit as good as albums retailing at nearly three times the price."

product softens the blow of the price increases."

In fact, separate research shows consumers might be prepared to pay even more for their albums. Interviews in several

cities carried out by the North Glasgow College showed that consumers were prepared to spend up to £15.65 on CDs.

Steve Lyttelton, manager of Tower Records in Piccadilly, London, said: "We certainly haven't had any adverse comments from customers about paying £12.99 for an album. The

only thing we do get complaints about are back catalogue prices where people resent paying £14.99 and £15.49 for albums that have been out for 25 years." Singles show even greater

Is it really such a sin to be ugly?

Tory MP George Gardiner has asked his party not to drop him because of his looks. But do they matter? **Rebecca Fowler reports**

There is no peace to be had for the ugly. They are less likely to find success, mates and happiness, and are more likely to be blamed for mishaps and crimes, in a world that has become more obsessed by beauty than the Greeks.

The latest casualty is Sir George Gardiner, the right wing MP and certainly no Adonis. This week he has been seceded his constituents not to drop him on the basis of his hangdog appearance, which has been compared to a rain-soaked Dracula.

Following hostile comments from local party members, and an alleged plot to oust him at a meeting this weekend, he wrote to the handsome people of Reigate: "I'm sorry about my physical appearance... but I was just born ugly."

His candid appeal confirms findings that beauty is more important than ever, and ugliness remains the sin that dares to show its face. According to a former clerk at the House of Commons, politicians are particularly prone to the affliction.

Philip Hensher was sacked from his position when he suggested that MPs are unusually ugly. He singled out David Mellor, double-chinned and gap-toothed; John Gummer, who has been compared to a toad; and Michael Portillo of whom he said: "His torso goes down to his knees and he has these little legs."

Although the MPs have achieved office in spite of their looks, the least dashing are unlikely to ever reach the top of their field. When a Labour colleague of Robin Cook was asked why he would never make Prime Minister, he said: "Because plastic surgery has yet to advance that far."

It was on the surface an unkind observation, but according to psychologists it is also true. The "physically challenged" are less likely to be trusted, and more likely to be blamed when things go wrong, as the instinct to equate beauty with good and ugliness with bad endures.

Despite the rise of political correctness, and the endurance of beloved uglies who prove beauty is from within including Quasimodo in the Hunchback of Notre Dame, making a come-back in Disney's latest film, Oscar Wilde's observation holds strong: "It is better to be beautiful than to be good. But... it is better to be good than to be ugly."

All recent research bodes badly for the uglies. In North America a survey showed that unattractive children were more likely to be blamed for misdemeanours; good looking criminals got shorter sentences than ugly criminals; and in an experiment at Sussex University babies held their gaze on the images of the best-looking adults.

Dr Martin Skinner, a social psychologist at Warwick University, said: "It is more important than ever, and we are following the fad in American politics, where you would never see a bad looking politician on television. There is still this correlation between good looks and what is nice."



'It is better to be beautiful than to be good. But... it is better to be good than to be ugly.'
Oscar Wilde

He added: "We simply do not respond to ugly things. Good fresh fruit is symmetrical and attractive, and it looks nice, compared to uneven damaged or rotten fruit. For people that clearly isn't the case, but that connection is still made."

The hostility to ugliness in America has driven one woman pioneer to set up a group for the 'appearance-impaired'. Their national crusade promotes stories for children that include short, bald princes, and their favourite slogan is: "Cinderella got stretch marks, Snow White wrinkled, and Rapunzel greyed."

From the beginning of time the pursuit of beauty has been a human preoccupation, re-

fining to mathematical precision by Plato. He argued all beautiful things could be divided into thirds, with the brow one third of the way from the hair line.

But it remains one of the great contradictions of ugliness that it has been the driving force for a number of prominent individuals, eager to compensate for their unsympathetic appearances with status. "Power is the great aphrodisiac," concluded Henry Kissinger, former US Secretary of State and no oil painting.

Although some men have been tortured by their physical appearance, including Charles Laughton, who played Quasimodo, others have flourished. Despite his pasty, barking, short, fat, coarse appearance Napoleon's aides claimed he would drive women into fits of excitement.

But scientists agree that women in the Western world have the roughest deal of all. Men have made up for physical deficits with power, including Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, one of the richest men in Britain, and Andrew Neil, former editor of the Sunday Times, often seen in the company of beautiful women.

Instead successful women remain preoccupied with anxieties about their physical appearances. Zoe Wanamaker, the actress, confessed recently: "If I were out of work, I'd be saving my dole money and booking my appointment with Harley Street for massive liposuction. Collagen injections for my lips would be pretty high on the list too."

Professor Steve Jones, a geneticist at University College London, has conducted research that shows that symmetrical faces are the most attractive, and men, whether they are road sweeps, soldiers or bankers, will inevitably be drawn to the same kind of female faces.

Professor Jones said: "There's a very strong consistency, and whichever men are choosing they always end up with the same bimbo, it's 21 with broad hips, and in biological terms it does the job."

"Whatever anyone tells you about beauty being in the eye of the beholder, it isn't."

So Sir George should perhaps at least be grateful that he is not a woman. Meanwhile Lady Gardiner, his loyal wife, would argue that whatever the scientists say beauty most definitely is in the eye of the beholder.



Facing the ugly truth? Charles Laughton (Ronald Grant Archive) with the unfortunate George Gardiner (inset). From top right: the double-chinned David Mellor, Andrew Neil, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Zoe Wanamaker, who would happily invest in liposuction and collagen implants



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news

Greenpeace lose round one in battle of sand eels

Greenpeace found itself outnumbered and on the run yesterday, as it continued trying to stop a fleet of Danish trawlers catching thousands of tonnes of sand eels off the Scottish coast.

But the environmental group said it had no intention of withdrawing its ship *Sirius* from the West Bank of the Firth of Clyde, where it has been engaged in four days of running battles with the boats of the industrial fishery.

Greenpeace is trying to prevent 24 Danish vessels setting and towing their fine-meshed nets along the bank, which is at the entrance of the Firth of Forth. The furious fishermen have fired distress flares at its high speed inflatables, attempted to slash them and chased the *Sirius*, which can move just faster than them.

"We don't want them catching us," said one of the crew by satellite telephone. "How would you like to be boarded and punched?" A Royal Navy fisheries protection vessel, HMS *Shetland*, has been observing the latest clashes but has not intervened.

The campaigners are demanding an end to the unregulated industrial fishing of the tiny sandeels and other small fish, claiming that this threatens the food supplies of larger fish like cod, seabirds, whales and dolphins and the North Sea's ecological balance.

They have chosen the West

Attempt to drive off Danish fleet is failure, writes
Nicholas Schoon

Bankie because it has only been heavily fished for sand eels recently and is heavily used by large seabird colonies nesting on the nearby coast.

The UK Government has been calling for regulation and quotas in this fishery, which only a few British trawlers are involved in. Greenpeace campaigner Chris Rose said he was disappointed that ministers showed no inclination to take any prompt action against the Danish fleet.

The group has obtained an opinion from barristers specialising in environmental law which says the Government could close fishing grounds on the West Bank.

Denmark is Europe's biggest practitioner of industrial fishing. Its big trawlers use large, very fine nets and advanced computer equipment to catch the bottom-dwelling fish which are processed into meal and oil.

Half the weight of fish caught from the North Sea fall into this category. Danish fishermen's leaders have accused Greenpeace of putting lives at risk with their obstruction tactics. Another Greenpeace vessel, *Arctic Sunrise*, has arrived in the area as back up.



Sailing into action...and back again: Greenpeace boat *Sirius* was forced to beat a retreat by the fleet of Danish trawlers

Fatties sought for a special pension

NIC CICUTTI

Throw away the bathroom scales and tuck into huge bags of chips and six pints of beer a night instead - you could be in for a bigger pension when you retire.

That was the message to Britain's fatties yesterday by one insurance company, which is offering special rates to those who are obese, diabetic and have high blood pressure or raised cholesterol levels.

The deal, by Stalwart Assurance, would give a person with a mixture of these conditions an increase in their annual retirement pay of up to 10 per cent.

For a 60-year-old man with a retirement pot of £50,000, the pension payout would be £5,661 a year, giving an extra income of about £8 a week compared to Stalwart's nearest competitor.

The snag is that the only reason why the company is prepared to pay more to those with weight-related problems is because they are likely to die sooner than their fit counterparts.

Stalwart's new pension for the overweight follows hard on the heels of a similar one it launched for smokers last year, in which they too were offered an uplift in their payouts if they were confirmed addicts of the demon weed.

Since the smokers' scheme was rolled out in September, the Dorking-based company has recorded a four-fold increase in new business.

Mike Fuller, managing director at Stalwart, said he expected substantial growth in the wake of its new initiative.

Mr Fuller rejected suggestions that offering a pension to obese people might remove the incentive to get fitter and encourage them to remain as they were.

In most instances, applicants were overweight for genuine medical reasons, he said, and were unlikely to become slimmer whatever the potential health benefits.

"We are simply reversing the principle that people with lifestyles that may reduce their life expectancy have to pay higher premiums for life assurance," he said.

"There is no reason why this same group of people should not have this taken into account when they buy their pension."

"If, on average, they are likely to have a slightly shorter life expectancy, it follows they should receive a higher pension each year to compensate."

To qualify for this increased annuity, or annual retirement income, applicants must be at least 25 per cent over the average weight for their height and have other predisposing conditions which could shorten their lives.

Typically, a woman who is 5ft 4ins tall would be expected to carry about 35lbs more than the 10 stone usually cited as being at the upper limit of "normal" weight. A 6ft man would have to weigh about 45lbs more than a normal 13 stone.

Further joys are in sight for the terminally unfit.

Within the next few months, Stalwart is planning to combine its two schemes, so that overweight cigarette smokers gain from a doubled up-rating of their pensions.

Even more benefits could soon follow for those whose very poor health makes them likely candidates for an extremely short retirement, Mr Fuller added.

Privacy alarm over NHS computer link

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

Confidentiality - a cornerstone of the doctor-patient relationship - is threatened by government plans to create an NHS-wide computer network linking every GP's surgery, hospital and health authority, doctors warned yesterday.

Doctor Sandy Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association's council, said that unless urgent action was taken to "de-identify" patient details "there is no doubt that down the line, government agencies will have access to information they should not."

The data would also be invaluable to banks, mortgage and insurance companies, employers as well as the Inland Revenue, security and immigration agencies, according to

Dr Fleur Fisher, head of the Ethics Committee. She said the health service was poised to go down the same "slippery slope" as the United States, where there have been major breaches of confidentiality.

"It will blow the confidential relationship, between doctor and patient," Dr Fisher told the third day of the BMA's annual meeting in Brighton yesterday.

In one case in the US, a bank manager who was also a board member of a Health Maintenance Organisation (equivalent of a health authority or large health centre), obtained details of the medical history of some of his clients at the bank from the HMO's database. He then foreclosed on loans those who had been treated for cancer.

In another case, a woman who was standing for election to the Senate was devastated af-

ter someone leaked details from her medical records of a suicide attempt. "This woman had not even told her family," Dr Fisher said. "She was in fact elected and is now suing the hospital for \$10m."

The BMA council is advising doctors, hospital trusts, and health authorities, to "just say no" to linking up to the network until confidentiality can be guaranteed via security measures such as encryption. These are now being reviewed by the Department of Health which has, until recently, proved resistant to the BMA's concerns.

Representatives of the 110,000-strong BMA membership endorsed the council's advice by a large majority, and now the association intends to mount a campaign to make patients aware of the risks and persuade health ministers to act.

At present, thousands of individual computers in the health service hold the medical records of millions of people. But an NHS-wide network - still at an embryonic stage - will be essential to the working of the internal market for billing and other administrative purposes.

Computer-held medical records - with names and addresses removed, which the Government says is sufficient to "de-identify" them - have already been sent to data processing companies by some hospitals. However, dates of birth and postcodes have been retained and this means the information can be traced back, Dr Fisher said. "The good news is that there are mechanisms [to protect confidentiality] and they are not overwhelmingly expensive. What we lack is the political will to do this."

The Government's announcement earlier this week of legislation to deny benefits to asylum seekers was condemned by doctors at the meeting yesterday. Dr Evan Harris, who treats detainees at Campsfield House, near Oxford, said: "This legislation is so tawdry and the motive so dishonourable that no civilised society would pass it into law." It will be introduced during the Third Reading of the Asylum and Immigration Bill in the Lords on Monday.

DAILY POEM

Lost Wisdom

By David Gascoyne

In the first morning
A cry above the unborn roofs
Of solitude and pain
A faint odour of vegetable matter
Fringing the violet lids of night
And hanging from the water's eyes
The simulacrum of the damned

Disturbance in the weather makes me see
The little angels without wings
The brittle needles in the sand
The rosy veins of polyp
And all the seamless seams

And now and then
From every abandoned mouth
An unstanch'd stream must flow
And then as now
The graves were opened once
And gold was melted by snow
Like lilies sown in sifted stone
And gathered once for all

As a young man in the 1930s, the poet David Gascoyne lived in Paris, coming into contact with writers and painters of the Surrealist movement such as André Breton and Louis Aragon, and publishing his own account, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, in 1935. He is this country's most important surrealist poet, but his work, too, is appreciated and admired in France, where he has lived for periods of his life. This evening, in London, he receives from the French government the insignia of the Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres.

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Young flee abuse for life on streets

GLENDIA COOPER

Rows, abuse and family breakdown are the major factors driving children, some as young as 12, on to the streets, according to a new report published today.

One in two runaways surveyed for the report by the charities Centrepoint and NSPCC said they ran away because of family fights and violence in the home, and one in five said physical abuse had contributed to their flight.

But the four refugees around the country that care for under-16s are under threat unless central and local government co-operate with charities over funding, the chief executive of Centrepoint warned.

The study, monitored 200 young people aged 12 to 16 who used the Centrepoint Refuge in London between November 1993 and March 1995.

Most young runaways had experienced unsettled and disrupted family life and almost

half had spent some time in care. Nearly six out of ten were from ethnic minorities. While those who fled from the parental home tended to do so because of conflicts and arguments, bullying and inappropriate placements drove young people in care to abscond.

Roger Thompson, the NSPCC's director of children's services, said: "We are seeing desperate children and young people running away from environments of chronic conflict abuse or bullying. But by running away these vulnerable children are placing themselves at great risk of further harm. It is often a case of 'out of the frying pan, into the fire'."

Nearly a quarter of under-16s interviewed slept rough while on the run. Many had experienced threats and violence when on the streets and some had be-

come involved in petty crime or prostitution. Despite these dangers most of the young people felt that these risks were preferable to remaining at home.

"Centrepoint sees over 2,000 homeless young people every year," said Victor Adebawale, the charity's chief executive.

"Four in ten of those young people on our streets today ran away from home or care before they were 16. There are hundreds of very young people out there every day with no one to turn to for help and support. I believe unless there is a sea-change in the way we listen to young people and respond to them with the right support we are almost condemning them to a life on the street."

He called on the Government to take a more active role in looking after such children.

□ *Nowhere To Hide - Giving Young Runaways a Voice* is available from Centrepoint, Bewley House, 2 Swallow Place, London W1R 7AA; £6.50.



Lesser evil: Many young runaways surveyed said they would rather risk life on the streets than return home or go back into care. Photograph: Edward Sykes

Divide narrowing as the South gets (a little) poorer

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

The UK is slowly becoming more homogeneous, while still retaining distinctive regional quirks, according to the latest edition of *Regional Trends*.

The narrowing of the North/South divide, which began with the 1990 recession continued in 1994, the report shows. Disposable income per head fell in the South-East and in Greater London after a small recovery in 1993, while it continued to rise in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the North, Yorkshire and Humberside and the East Midlands, which overtook the West Midlands as the region which makes the largest share of its living from manufacturing.

Longer-term trends also suggest that regional divides are narrowing. Since the early 1970s, the birth rate has become more equal across the country, as has infant mortality, which

used to be higher in the North, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Most regions are now much closer to the UK average, with the exception of the South-East where infant mortality remains lowest.

Since the mid-1980s household size across the regions has become more equal as has the proportion of owner-occupiers. The biggest difference has been seen in Scotland. In 1981, only 36 per cent of Scots were owner-occupiers with over half living in council or new-town housing. But by 1994, the figures had turned round. Fifty-seven per cent of Scots were owner-occupiers, as opposed to about two-thirds for the UK as a whole.

Although Scotland still has the highest proportion of council housing, at 33 per cent, the difference between it and the rest of the UK was much smaller than before.

The proportion of 16-year-olds staying in education has

also narrowed between the regions, as has the ownership of household goods, including washing machines, videos and central heating.

Explaining such changes is highly complex, Alison Holding, *Regional Trends* associate editor said yesterday. "But the policy pursued by both central government and the private sector of relocating out of London may have something to do with it. That, in turn, has probably been made possible by better telecommunications" - mainly better telecommunications, which included the fax revolution, networked computers, video links and mobile phones, as well as improved transport.

Regional Trends, however, shows much diversity remains. In the North, for example, more than three in 10 men drank more than the recommended sensible level - the highest for any region. In the North-West, more women than men now smoke - the only re-

gion where that is true. Council tenants in Yorkshire and Humberside enjoy the lowest rents and the region has highest proportion of microwaves and washing machines in the country.

Women in the East Midlands in full-time work do the longest hours for the lowest pay. But people in the region were the most likely to take a holiday in 1995. At 60 per cent, the region also recorded the highest proportion of new cars registered as company cars.

In East Anglia, fewer women smoked than in any other region, but one in seven drank more than the recommended amount, a figure beaten only in Yorkshire and Humberside. Scotland continued to have a better record of exam passes at 16 than the rest of Britain. Northern Ireland was the only region in 1995 to see a sharp increase in house prices. *Regional Trends 31*, 1996. HMSO £35.95

The Buddha, cold air and the birch

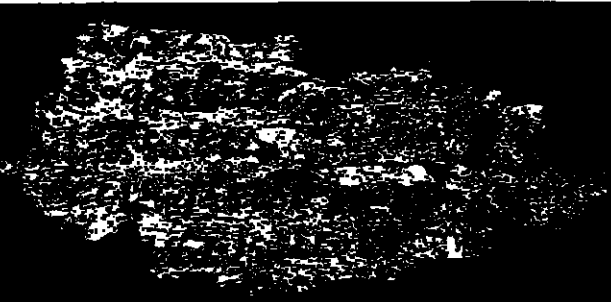
ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Fragments of Buddhist manuscripts written on birch-bark 1800 years ago in what is now Afghanistan may contain previously unknown Buddhist texts, according to the British Museum.

Graham Shaw, the deputy director of the Library's Oriental and India Office Collections, said the fragments are several centuries older than previously known Buddhist manuscripts.

They were bought for an undisclosed amount from a British dealer, and contain parts of about 25 texts from the Gandhari Buddhist civilisation which flourished in what is now eastern Afghanistan, using a script which disappeared in the fifth century AD.

Though Gautama Buddha died in 486BC, after founding a religion which is still one of the world's most important, none of his teachings were written down for at least 300 years after his death.



Ancient teachings: 1800-year-old birch-bark manuscripts

The problem for later scholars is that Buddhism, though triumphant in northern India by the third century BC, later vanished from there, under the twin pressures of a Hindu renaissance and Muslim hostility.

Though it is believed that many Buddhist texts are early, the manuscripts that have survived are almost all translations into the languages of neighbouring countries where Buddhism still flourishes.

Lance Cousins, a former head of Buddhist studies at

Manchester University, said yesterday that oral transmission within monasteries could be more a more reliable way to preserve a text than copying manuscripts, a notoriously error-prone process.

Mr Shaw said that the manuscripts he had bought had formed part of a much larger collection. Not all had been identified. "We don't have any one complete text, but it looks as if we have samples from a range of Buddhist scriptures."

"We have already identified some technical treatises and philosophical expositions. We also have some more popular interpretations of Buddhist teachings in poetical form, that were meant for a mass audience - the 'songs of Lake Anavatapta' on the shores of the lake in high Himalayas, in which each member of the Buddha's circle recounts the deeds in former lives which have made him the man he is."

However, he believed that some of the texts not yet identified might contain entirely new stories or teachings. Previous to this find, most of the oldest Buddhist manuscripts were Chinese, Tibetan, or Nepalese.

Himalayan monasteries, which had the advantage of cold, dry air could preserve manuscripts for centuries. Older Buddhist engravings had also appeared in central Asia.

Southern Buddhism, with a hotter, damper climate, and palm leaves instead of birch-bark to write on has no manuscripts older than the ninth century.

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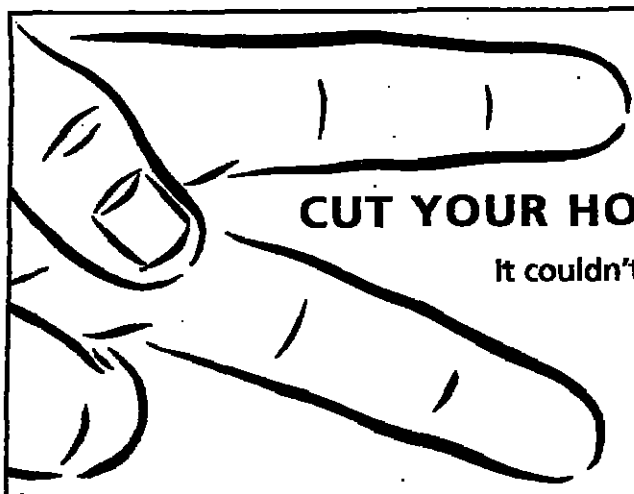
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the constitution debate

Blair keeps secret weapon under wraps

Labour is today expected to cap its plans to stage referendums on Scottish and Welsh devolution – exclusively revealed in yesterday's *Independent* – with a fresh bombshell.

Leadership sources said last night the new initiative would cause as big a shock on the political Richter Scale as Tony Blair's announcement in 1994 that Clause Four of the party's constitution was to be re-written.

While the substance of the announcement was being kept a closely-guarded secret, there was strong speculation at Westminster that Mr Blair was determined to answer the long-standing question about the role of Scottish MPs at Westminster – once they have their own Parliament in Edinburgh. John Major said last night that one of the "intractable problems" raised by Labour

devolution plans related to what is called the West Lothian question.

"Simply put, why should Scottish and Welsh MPs be able to vote on English matters, but English MPs be unable to vote on Scottish and Welsh matters? Would devolution mean a cut in the number of Scottish and Welsh MPs at Westminster? If not, why not?" One senior Labour source

Reports by Anthony Bevins

said last night that the announcement to be made by Labour's Scottish spokesman, George Robertson, today would "shoot the Tory fox" – defusing that critical question for good.

Whether that happens remains to be seen, but yesterday's referendum revelation in the *In-*

dependent caused uproar inside and outside the Labour ranks. Labour backbenchers said they had not been consulted over the sudden move and some feared it backtracked on previous commitments to set up the new assemblies come what may.

Dennis Canavan, Labour MP for Falkirk West, told BBC Radio 4's *The World at One* that he suspected a "shifting away" from those commitments.

"I take the view that there is no need for a referendum because the Labour Party will include in its manifesto a commitment to set up a Scottish Parliament and if we win the general election, then we shall have a clear mandate from the

people to legislate for that Scottish Parliament as soon as possible."

Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, said: "Amid the chaos of Labour's ducking and weaving on devolution, one clear fact has emerged about Tony Blair's commitment to Scotland. His message to Scottish Labour is: Retreat."

"Labour's devolution policy is now a shambles. They are mak-

ing it up as they go along – constantly backtracking. Tony Blair has been forced to take the wheel. We are fighting for Scotland while they are fighting amongst themselves, putting party interest before their country."

He said Labour's London spin-doctors had gone behind Mr Robertson, briefing the media that powers to raise a special tax in Scotland would not be used.

PM reflects on Tories' 17 years of evolution

CONSERVATIVE

The Tories were not against constitutional change, but they wanted evolution, not revolution, John Major said last night.

He told a meeting of the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies, in London, that some of the Labour and Liberal Democrat proposals for change were not only pointless, but damaging and irreversible.

To illustrate his own ability to adapt, the Prime Minister said that the past 17 years had seen the introduction of a new departmental system of parliamentary select committees, new procedures to scrutinise European legislation, reform of the Commons working day, and a new Budget process that brought together tax and spending decisions.

Mr Major then floated a tentative new proposal for change: "I would like to examine starting the parliamentary year in May, not November."

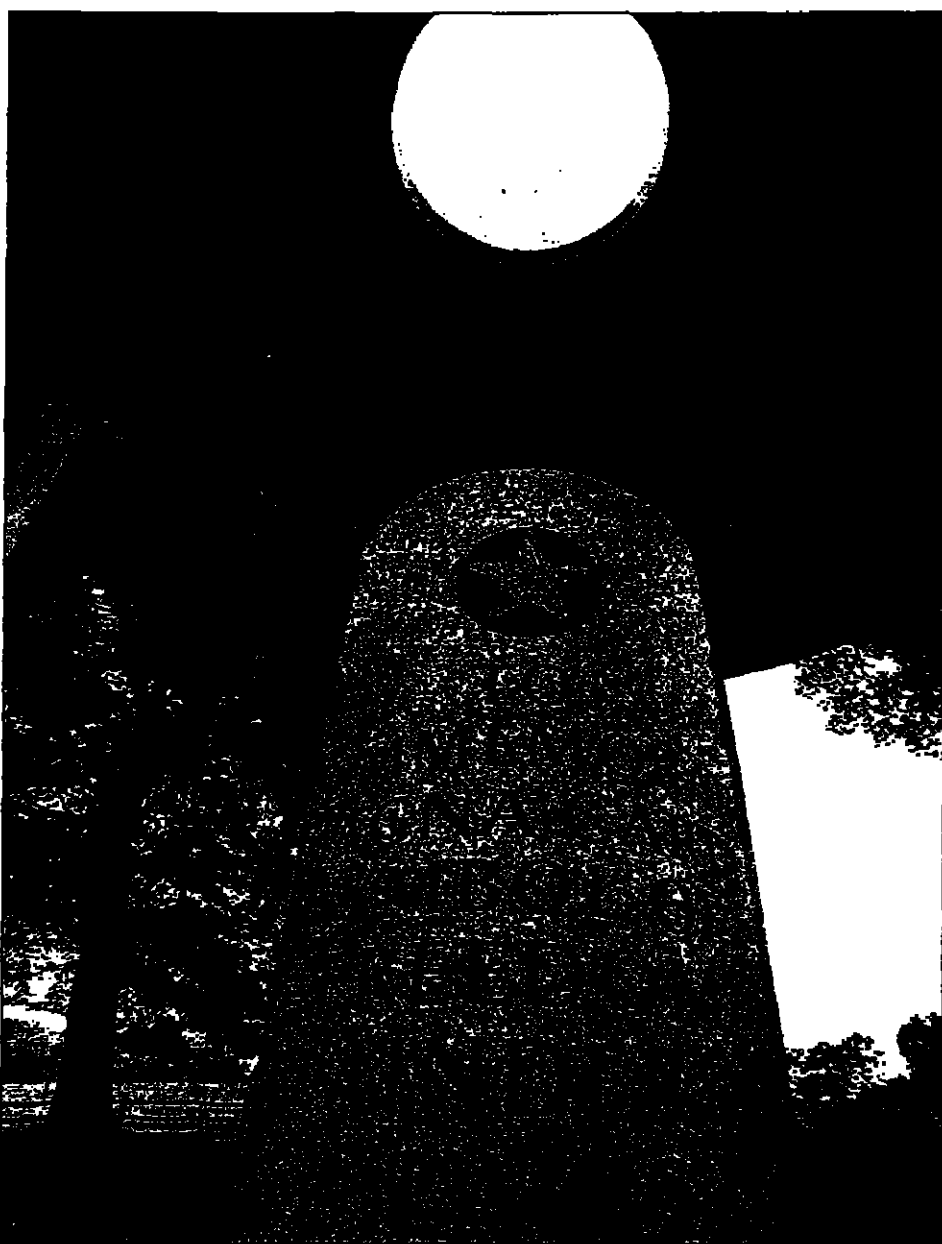
That could ease the logjam of parliamentary business over the autumn and winter, when legislative second reading procedures were currently clashing with the Budget. It could also be linked with a "more structured planning of the legislative programme" under which the Queen's Speech could include not only the firm legislation for the year ahead, but also "provisional plans" for the year after.

Providing greater time for consideration and scrutiny should mean better Bills and improved statute. Mr Major said that was the kind of practical solution he favoured; not change for change's sake.

"The British constitution is vibrant and robust. But it is not indestructible," he warned. "People must realise that our constitution is not a piece of architecture that one can re-engineer by knocking down a wall here or adding an extension there. It's a living, breathing constitution. Its roots are ancient, but it has evolved. And it has been stable because it has popular support."

Using the monarchy as an example, he said no alternative could match it in the affections of the British people; it bound the people together and it ensured that the rough and tumble of political debate left the head of state untouched and untarnished.

Mr Major said it was not right to suggest, as critics did, that the Conservatives had centralised power. They had curbed local government spending and created a national curriculum, but they had also devolved power to hospital trusts, and school governing bodies.



The monument celebrating the granting of the Magna Carta by King John at Runnymede in 1215, recognising the rights and privileges of barons, the church and freemen. Photograph: Edward Sykes

Killing off separatism

Public alienation and cynicism have been bred by the huge shift of power to the centre under the Conservatives, shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw said last night.

He told a Westminster meeting of Charter 88, the constitutional pressure group, that the Prime Minister's presentation of himself as the guardian of the British constitution was laughable.

"For he and his predecessor have together presided over the greatest constitutional changes this country has seen for many decades."

"But it has been change which has been surreptitious, ill-thought through, and lacking in popular consent."

"There has, however, been one consistent element in all that has been done – power. Power, not to the public, but to Ministers, to Whitehall, and to the Conservative Party. Year by year, control over government in its widest sense has been centralised in the hands of Ministers."

Mr Straw said that Mr Major's position was less credible today because "in their better days" the Conservatives had supported most of the proposals Labour was now making for improvement. Such measures included devolution for Scotland, a Welsh assembly, elected regional councils

for England, reform of the House of Lords and a Bill of Rights that would eventually lead to a British Bill, containing clear, statutory declarations of the citizen's rights and responsibilities.

Labour's programme of remedial reform also included a Freedom of Information Act and the creation of a statutory code of conduct for Ministers and civil servants.

"If our constitution and the Union is to survive," Mr Straw warned, "it must adapt to new challenges. We would not advocate devolution if we thought it would place the Union in jeopardy. Our plans are designed to strengthen the Union, and will kill separatism stone dead."

Pliability is its strength

The Prime Minister's hysterical scaremongering over constitutional change showed a lack of understanding of British history, Paddy Ashdown said yesterday.

"The truth is that the Conservatives in Westminster would rather die than share power with anyone else – and probably will," the Liberal Democrat leader told a lunchtime meeting held by the Association of British Editors in the Lords.

But he insisted: "Britain's constitution is not, and never has been, some inviolable museum piece... which it is our duty to preserve, untouched and unaltered, exactly as we inherited it."

he talks, down-eyed, about warm beer and old maids cycling to Communion. But the world changes and so does our constitution. Our constitution is a dynamic, living thing – evolving, developing, adapting to change.

"It has been altered in some way, great or small, by every generation over the last 300 years. That is our constitution's strength."

"That is why it has survived 300 years without revolution – and why it has given us 300 years of stable government."

Mr Ashdown said a good start could be made on redressing the balance of the in-

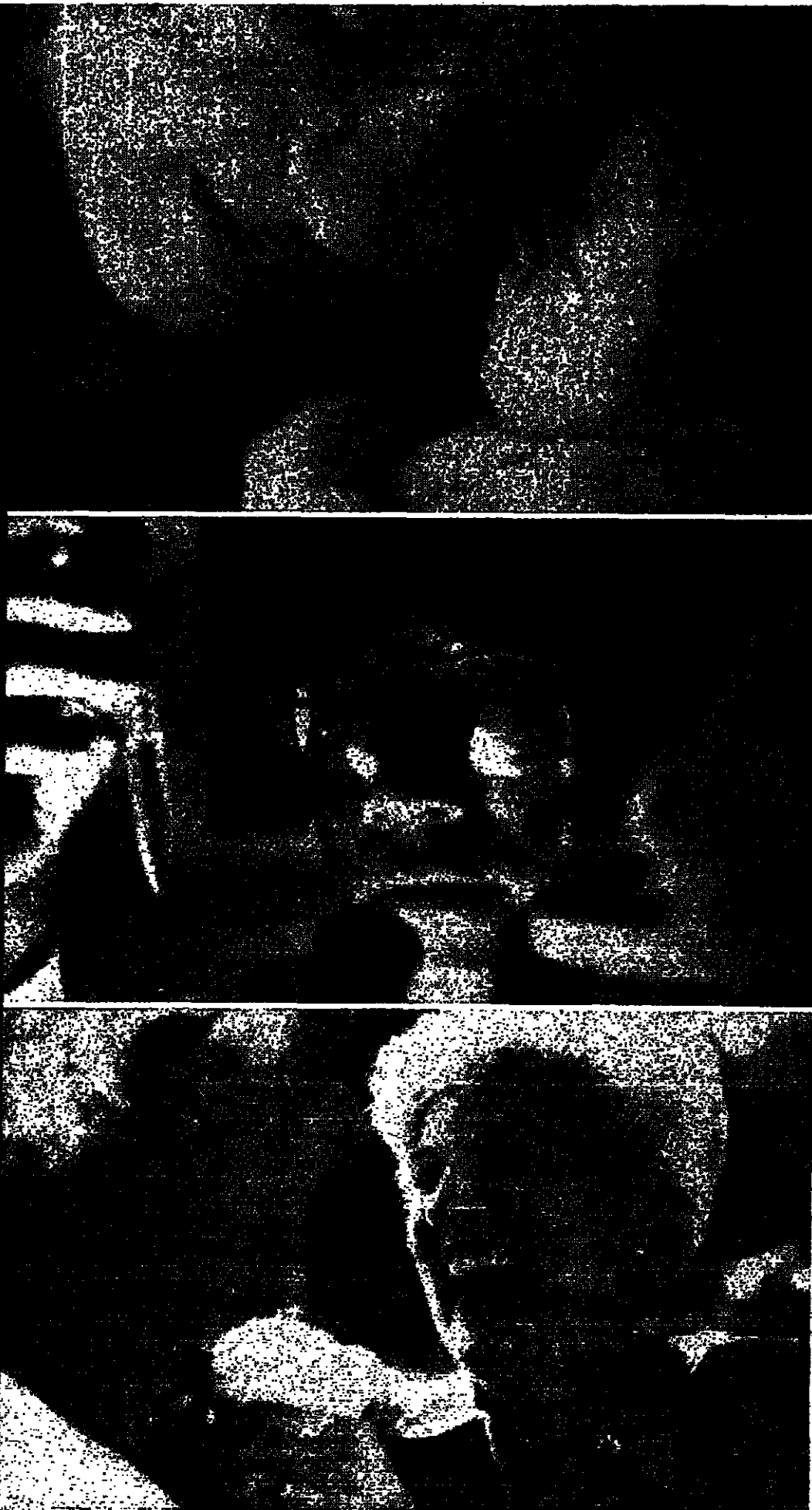
creasingly centralised state created by Tory governments since 1979, by giving local communities more power to take decisions for themselves.

That meant not only holding referendums on major constitutional issues like voting reform and European integration, but also local plebiscites "on contentious local issues".

Mr Ashdown said that under the Tories, Britain had become "the most centralised state in the western world".

With reference to Scottish devolution, Mr Ashdown said the Prime Minister had only one card left to play in defence of his concentration of power – fear – and he added: "He will play that card for all it is worth."

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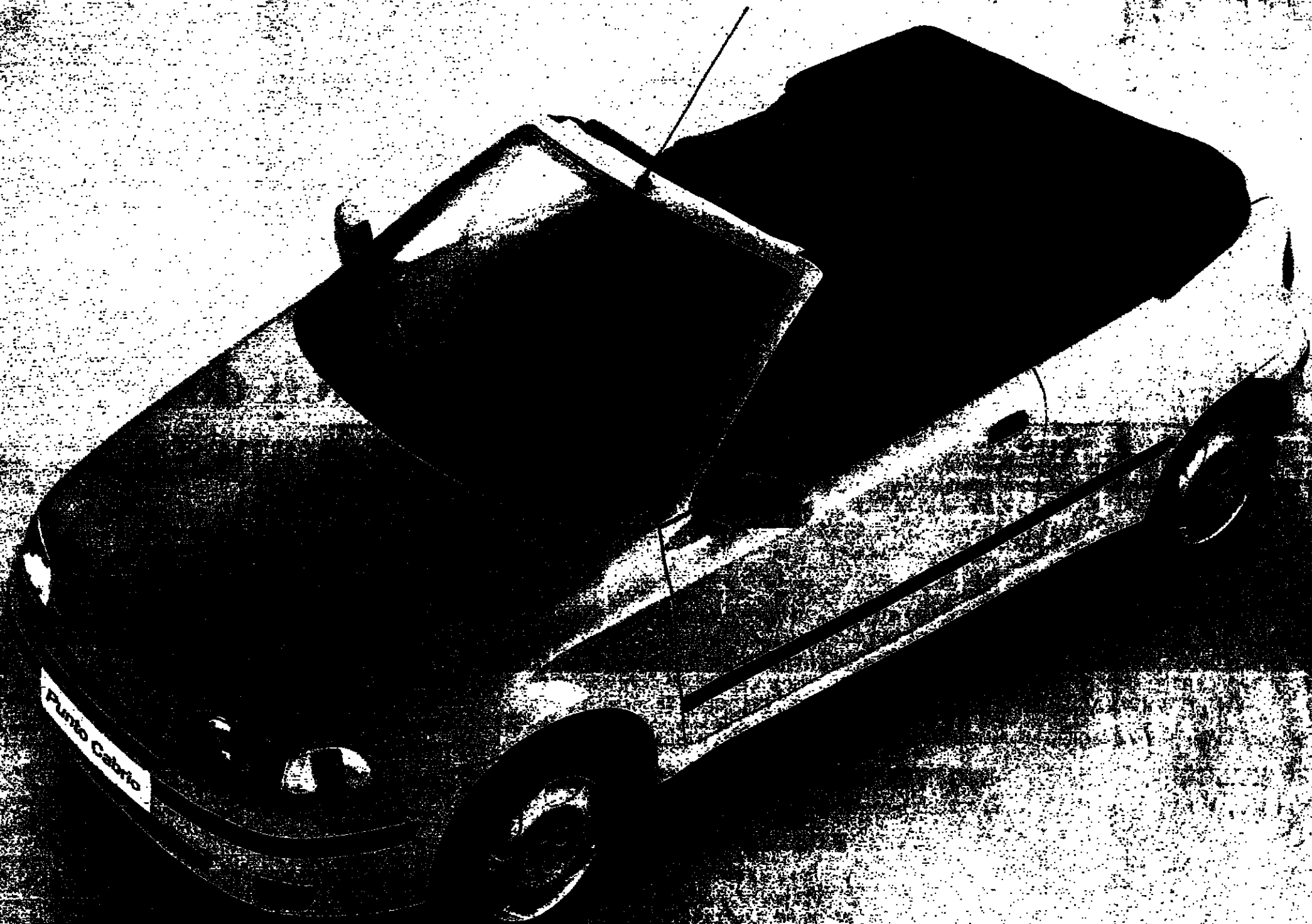
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politics

Judicial appointments: Report questions Prime Minister's power of veto over senior decisions

MPs opt to keep choice of judges a male preserve

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Legal Affairs Editor

Large-scale reform of the system for appointing judges was ruled out yesterday by the Conservative-dominated Commons Home Affairs Select Committee, despite continuing evidence that women and racial minorities are still markedly under-represented on the bench.

The effective vote of confidence in the status quo by the committee's Tory members comes as male appointments to all ranks of the judiciary stands at 2,804 compared to 312 women and just 75 people of non-white origin, predominantly in the lower echelons.

While voicing some low-key criticisms and suggesting some limited changes, a report from the committee yesterday leaves senior appointments, particularly in the continuing control of an overwhelmingly male, white and exclusively-educated judicial Establishment.

The report suggests that the Prime Minister should no longer have the power of veto over the appointment of senior judges. But even this is not worded as a firm recommendation. "We have some qualms about the role of the Prime Minister... in particular we do not see how he or she might be better informed than the Lord Chancellor to make recommendations to the Queen. We

therefore question whether the Prime Minister should play any part in appointing judges," the MPs say.

But the committee rejected Opposition plans for a judicial appointments commission and ruled out wholesale reform.

All but the most junior judges are appointed after the Lord Chancellor's Department takes informal and secret "soundings" among existing judges and leading barristers.

Far from recommending the abolition of the legal equivalent of the old boys' network, which is incompatible with generally accepted equal opportunities practice, the committee declared: "We are satisfied that there is value in gathering opinions of serving judges and of practitioners, although we believe that there may be some scope for improvement in the methods by which comments are collated."

While accepting that job descriptions and selection criteria for all judicial posts should be formulated without delay, including for the high-ranking "invitation-only" posts in the High Court and above, the MPs rejected the idea of open advertisement and competition for senior posts.

Labour MPs on the committee attempted to insert paragraphs spotlighting the drawbacks of the current system, but were outvoted by Tory members.

Jo Hayes, chairwoman of the Association of Women Barristers, said: "We remain very concerned that not enough women are getting selected for the senior High Court appointments, even though quite a number are allowed to sit as part-time deputies. Secret soundings mean that the system will remain vulnerable to charges that it unfairly excludes well-qualified women."

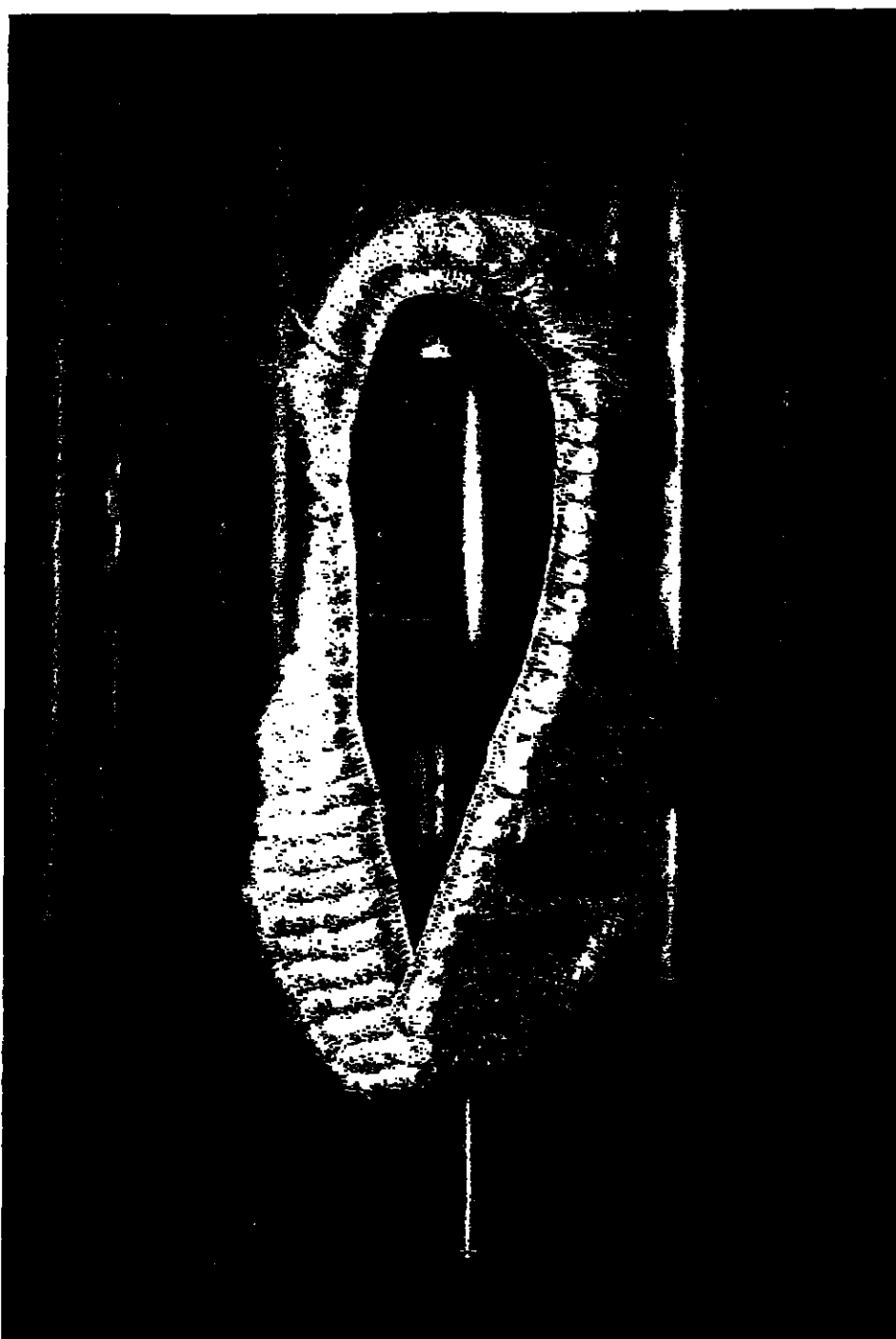
The committee gave the system for appointing magistrates a largely clean bill of health, but said imbalances in the political, ethnic and educational make-up of JPs often arose because many people did not realise they were eligible to apply.

There should be high-profile radio and television advertising campaigns designed to attract suitable candidates, the MPs said.

Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, welcomed the committee's findings, saying: "I am particularly pleased that they agree that the appointments process treats men and women equally and that they have welcomed my initiatives to encourage ethnic minority practitioners to apply for judicial office, since I am very keen to ensure that more judges are appointed from both groups."

Home Affairs Committee: Judicial Appointments Procedures. HMSO: £12.50.

Old boys' network, page 19



Head start: The Lord Chancellor's wig. A report by MPs rules out reform of a system where most senior appointments are still the preserve of white males. Photograph: Dillon Bryden

Soames in the firing line over 'reshuffle plot'

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

Right-wing Tory MPs have mounted a "stop Soames" campaign to stop the defence minister being promoted to the Cabinet in a reshuffle of ministerial ranks.

The right wing is furious over allegations going the rounds at Westminster that one of Nicholas Soames's supporters last week leaked details of a letter which effectively scuppered the chances of David Davis gaining promotion.

Mr Davis - a Euro-sceptic who had a key role in the EU non-cooperation policy - was in line to replace Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, until it was disclosed he had written to John Major threatening to resign unless he was promoted in the reshuffle. The right claims the aim of the leak was to block Mr Davis, and to leave the way open for Mr Soames.

Mr Soames, who is totally loyal to the Prime Minister, would be able to assuage the anger of the farmers and Britain's European partners, but Tory Euro-sceptics regard him as too "wet" and are keen to keep him out of the Cabinet.

Mr Major is expected to reshuffle the ranks next week to freshen the team that will go into the general election and replace ministers who have asked to stand down, including Tim Eggart, the energy minister, and Steven Norris, the minister for transport in London.

Mr Major yesterday played down speculation that Mr Hogg would be sacked, but Tories still believe he could be moved sideways to become Attorney General. Some senior Conservatives want Mr Major to recall

Jonathan Aitken, after having his name cleared after a select committee "sleaze" inquiry.

There has also been a whispering campaign against George Gardiner over his threat to resign his seat if he loses the selection meeting in his Reigate constituency.

"Peter Lilley, Nicholas Lyell, Hartley Booth and Cyril Townsend have all faced reselection without threatening to resign," said one Tory MP.

Mr Hogg faces fresh embarrassment next week when he walks into the "lions' den" with the farmers at the Royal Show. While there, he will also play host to Franz Fischler, the European Commissioner responsible for agriculture, who had the job of imposing the ban on British beef exports. Some Tories were privately predicting they would both need "tin hats" to protect them from the backlash of farmers, still fuming over the loss of their business.

Whitehall sources said Mr Hogg may yet ask Mr Major for a move. "He is an honourable man, and may feel that his credibility has been sullied along with the cows," said one official.



Nicholas Soames: Loyalist unloved on the right

Tory rebels back down on homes sale

COLIN BROWN

Tory MPs were warned yesterday that they were putting at risk tax cuts and further defence orders, with the risk of jobs in their constituencies, if they rebelled against the £1.5bn sale of married quarters for the armed forces.

David Clark, Labour's defence spokesman, said: "It really is sad that the Conservatives put tax cuts before the defence of Britain."

The pressure applied to Tory rebels appeared to be working as 13 Conservative MPs withdrew their names from a Commons motion opposing the sale. Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, was mounting a vigorous counter-attack to stop the scheme being blocked. He briefed backbenchers individually to break the back of the threatened rebellion, and he made it clear at a press conference at the Ministry of Defence, that defence orders could be affected.

"If the sale did not go ahead, the Government would lose the money in the coming year," he said. Filling the £1.5bn hole in the Treasury's finances would be a "collective decision" for the Cabinet, he said. But he did not rule out the possibility that defence contractors could be postponed and MPs were being warned the Chancellor would lose room for tax cuts.

The pressure on the Chancellor was increased by the announcement in a written Commons reply that the cost of the beef compensation and slaughter programme would be £2.5bn, reduced to £2bn after a European Union rebate. That will be met out of the reserves.

Mr Portillo said: "It is a problem which the Government should not have to face because this policy is well-founded for the forces, for the economic strategy and for the philosophy of the Government."

Some of those who withdrew their names said they had signed the Commons motion under false pretences. After being assured that the rents of the armed forces would not rise steeply as a result of the sale, they removed their names from the list of 65 supporters.

They included right-wingers such as John Townend, the chairman of the 92 Group of Thatcherite Tory MPs. Nicholas Budgen, a leading Euro-sceptic, and those on the left of the party, including Peter Bottomley, Sir Jim Lester and Andrew Rowe. The "charm offensive" by Mr Portillo to win back support has included Euro-sceptic

Ordnance did need licence to export

STEPHEN GOODWIN

Sir Robin Butler, head of the Home Civil Service, yesterday denied a claim by the senior civil servants' union that Whitehall's political neutrality is being compromised.

In a two-hour appearance before an all-party committee of MPs, Sir Robin also contradicted a suggestion by Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, that the privatised Royal Ordnance company was uniquely exempt from normal licensing requirements for arms exports.

The Independent reported on Tuesday that a letter sent by Mr Portillo to Stephen Byers, a Labour frontbencher, revealed that Lord Justice Scott was misled during his inquiry into the export of arms-related equipment to Iraq and Iran.

Contrary to an assurance given to the inquiry, Mr Portillo said it appeared "some arrangement" must have been agreed that enabled company to continue its exemption after its sale to British Aerospace in 1987. An eight-month tangle of more than 1,000 RO export licence applications showed a "relative absence" of supporting documentation.

Pressed yesterday by Labour's John Gennell, Sir Robin said that although the matter was not within his personal competence, he had seen a briefing which contradicted the Independent and that the company was subject to the licensing procedures in just the normal way after its sale to BAe.

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Ghostly sneers echo from Amis's library

It must be the literary sale of the year. Sir Kingsley Amis's library - more than 1,600 books, many covered with scribbles of criticism or praise - comes up for auction next month, together with his typewriter, his leather desk and his battered red armchair.

The author of *Lucky Jim* and *The Old Devils* died aged 73 last October - triggering a war between his biographer, Eric Jacobs, and his equally famous son Martin over whether the diaries of his last months should be published - and leafing through the volumes is a ghostly task.

Much of his life seems to hang between their pages, either because the books are his own work, about his work, or contain his handwritten comments on the contents or forgotten letters from friends.

Pluck a volume out and his scrawled comments leap from the margin. Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* is a good example from a man notorious for his right-wing views and misogyny. "Piss off," he wrote

Annotated books from the outspoken writer are up for sale, writes Marianne Macdonald

beside a description of the refined Lady Marchmain.

"Well, what?" his ballpoint demands after Charles announces he knew what had drawn Sebastian to Morocco. Most of all, Amis was amused by Waugh's characters' indolence. "None of the family has enough, indeed anything to do," the pen notes, and "At least Rex does something for a living." His verdict: "Twee Rich Upper Class Novelistic Queer."

Other writers come off badly too. "Balls," Amis wrote on the section of the *Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry* devoted to Derek Mahon. And later: "A fucking fool." "Really?" he sneers when Mahon writes of birds which "sing with a noise like paper tearing".

But a volume of poems by his friend Philip Larkin shows that Amis was not always impossible to please. A typewritten page inside *High Windows* reads: "I can find only two faults with Philip Larkin's poetry: there isn't enough of it, and in about one poem in three there is what I would call a wilfully eccentric word..."

Amis's enthusiasm for Ian Fleming's James Bond novels is also evident. *The Spy Who Loved Me* is covered with cryptic notes. "[Bond] smiles 13 times by p.165" says one. "[Bond's] touch gives small shock 146-7".

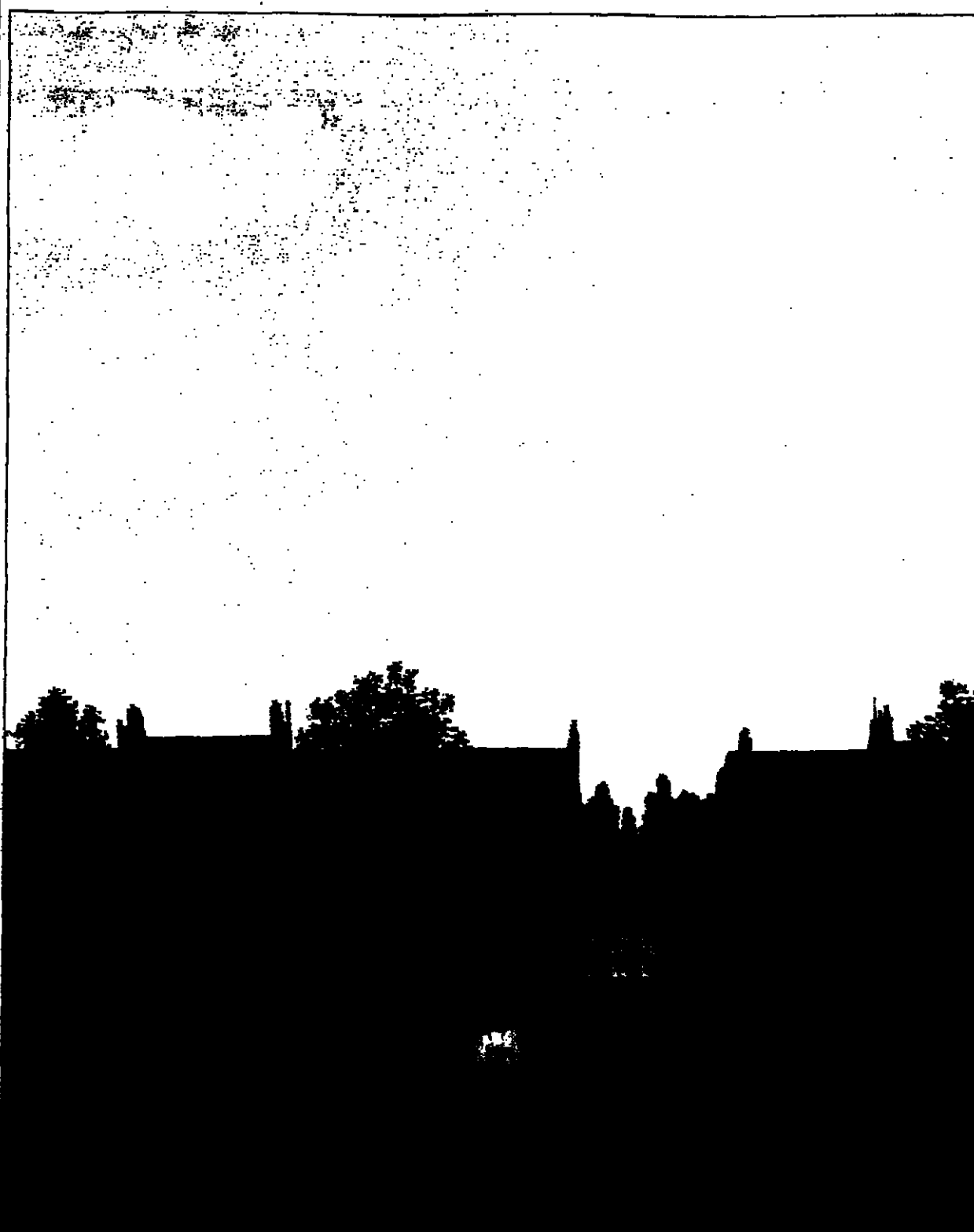
An unpublished manuscript hidden in the pages of *Jake's Thing*, Amis's novel about an ageing Oxford don, gives an account of how it came to be written.

"I was thinking how boring and awful permissiveness & poru & women's lib [was] getting & also how comparatively old I was getting, when I met a girl & read a book. The girl, who was v. attractive, was a behavioural psychologist w. a doctorate of phil. in the treatment of sexual inadequacy..."

The library contains a wide variety of works, from the *Faber Book of Drink, Drinkers and Drinking* (in which Amis features heavily) to *Wild Flowers in Their Seasons* and Alexander Foote's *Handbook For Spies*. There is Proust, but also the less elevated Dick Francis and Jeffrey Archer.

The collection rivals that owned by the late Graham Greene, bought for £1m by an United States college last year but Sotheby's, which is selling Amis's library on 11 July on behalf of his estate, has estimated it will fetch much less: up to £20,000. The oak desk, typewriter and battered armchair are a snip, meanwhile, at the expected sums of £400, £300, £200 respectively.

Magritte at a premium as £2.5m bid puts past in the shade



An auction record of £2.5m for a painting by the Belgian surrealist, René Magritte was paid at a Christie's sale in London yesterday. *L'Empire des Femmes* (above) - one of series by the artist contrasting daylight and darkness - was started in 1948 and completed in 1962, during which timespan he completed the rest of the set. Fierce competition between a telephone bidder and one in the saleroom drove the price way over Christie's top estimate of £800,000.

BBC to launch first black TV news

LOUISE JURY

The BBC's first news and current affairs programme specifically for black viewers goes on air next month.

The series, *Black Britain*, is being made by a team which is based alongside the BBC's other heavyweight current affairs programmes, including *Newsnight*, in west London.

It comes 18 months after an internal report, "People and Programmes", warned that the corporation was in danger of losing its black audience. It was viewed as white, middle-class and less palatable than alternatives, the research found.

At its launch yesterday, Mark Damazer, head of BBC News weekly programmes, said *Black Britain* was an "overdue attempt to recognise the interests and concerns of black people in the UK, many of whom at the moment feel that our other programmes do not adequately reflect their varied lives."

The series will be fronted by Rianna Scipio, television's first black weather presenter, with reporters including Clive Myrie and Donn Kogbara. The focus will be on news, but will also cover sport, the arts and entertainment. There will be regular reports from around the world.

Patrick Young, the producer, said: "The days of lumping all black people together as a single group are long gone. The community is extremely diverse, split by gender, ethnicity and class and this programme aims to reflect that."

Research for the "People and Programmes" report showed African-Caribbeans and Asians wanted to see more news on television and radio, especially about their own communities. It found that BBC programmes targeted at black audiences had been less successful than efforts for the Asian community.

Black Britain goes on air on Tuesday, 9 July, at 7.30pm.

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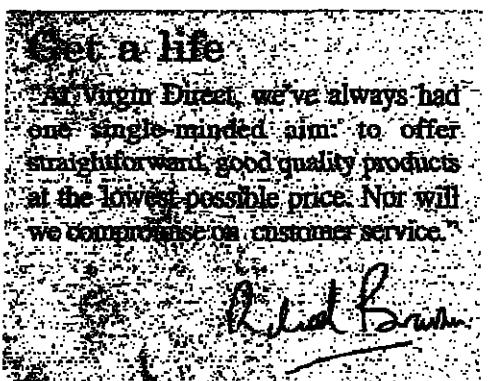
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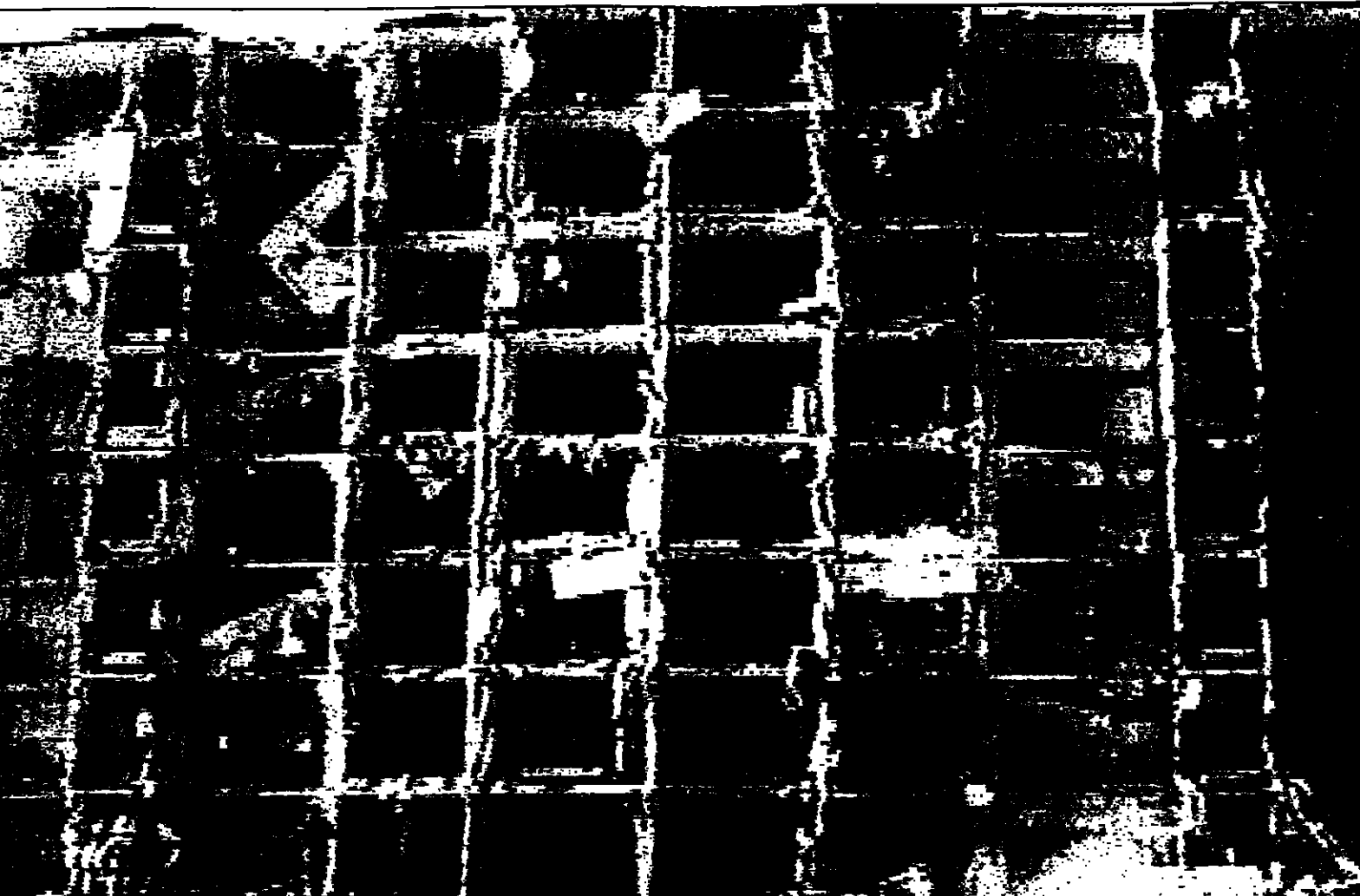
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DEATH IN THE MIDDLE EAST

'Iran is blamed, but the chances are



Vision of death: A Saudi television picture of the devastated apartment building at the air force base near Dhahran Photograph: AP

Scenes of carnage return to haunt US

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

The scene might have been Oklahoma City, April 1995, or for those with longer memories, the US marines barracks in Beirut in October 1983. But beyond their horror, the now familiar images of death and destruction at Khobar Tower complex are, above all for the Clinton administration, a jarring reminder of the pressures that threaten the crucial relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

The massive explosion which sheared away a cross-section of one residential building and ravaged two others at the King Abdul Aziz base, near Dhahran, was the most devastating anti-American incident of its kind since the Beirut truck bombing that killed 241 American military personnel and drove the US out of Lebanon.

This time "only" 19 American servicemen died, and the mild-mannered US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, vowed with uncommon ferocity that those responsible would be "hunted down."

Washington, he said yesterday, before leaving Cairo to visit the scene, "will not be deterred from fulfilling its duties around the world". The first goal may prove easier than the second.

According to officials here, witnesses may be able to identify the two suspects who ran from the fuel tanker truck and escaped in a white car, just before an estimated 5,000lb of explosives detonated with a blast causing a 35ft-deep crater and shock waves felt 40 miles away in the island state of Bahrain.

If so, then the Saudi authorities, aided by a team of FBI investigators who arrived in the kingdom yesterday, may be able to round up the perpetrators as speedily as after last November's comparable attack in Riyadh, in which seven people, five of them Americans, lost their lives. After making televised confessions and acknowledging ideological ties to Islamic fundamentalists in other countries, four Saudi men were beheaded three weeks ago.

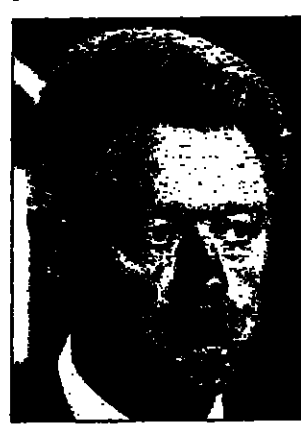
One immediate consequence of the tragedy will be to push terrorism, and Middle Eastern terrorism in particular, to the top of the agenda of the G7 summit which opens today.

No fewer than 40 "specific recommendations" to tackle terrorism will be adopted by leaders of the biggest industrial nations, President Bill Clinton said as he left for Lyons, Washington, he added, expected its allies to "walk hand-in-hand" with it.

But this too may be less than simple. Inevitably - Mr Clinton himself said as much yesterday - the blast will see election year demands from the US for tougher international measures against "rogue states" such as Iran and Iraq, the prime suspects for whatever government links may exist with the attack. Hitherto, however, the Europeans have resisted efforts to isolate Tehran further.

Even harder to gauge are the long-term effects of the attack, at a time when uncertainty over the succession in Saudi Arabia adds to longstanding sensitivities over the country's vital and highly visible links with the US and the West.

Once again, Mr Clinton went



Clinton: Allies must help isolate terrorist states

Saudi Arabia, which is designed to be as unobtrusive as possible. Semi-officially it is put at 5,000. In fact, some observers say, the figure might be three or four times greater. The American dead and wounded in Dhahran were overwhelmingly air force personnel, assigned to enforce the UN "no-fly zone" over southern Iraq.

Why Western troops kept a low profile

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Defence Correspondent

The gigantic King Abdul Aziz air base at Dhahran is the centre for the low-key operation to monitor the safety of Arabs in southern Iraq. Like all Saudi military installations, it is huge and well appointed - which proved lucky for the Allies in the 1991 Gulf war, providing exceptionally long runways and ample space for fleets of aircraft.

American, British and French forces arrived at Dhahran soon after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Immediately after the Gulf war ended in March 1991, the United Nations passed resolutions establishing a "no-fly zone" over Iraq south of the 32nd parallel, which was designed to prevent Iraqi air attacks on the Shia Muslims of the area who were in conflict with the predominantly Sunni Iraqi government. The no-fly zone was also intended to protect the reconnaissance aircraft of the three main coalition partners - the US, Britain and France - who were monitoring continued Iraqi ground action against the Shia Muslims, and President Saddam Hussein's attempts to drain the southern marshes.

If Islamic fundamentalists based in Saudi Arabia, possibly associated with Shia Muslims in Iran, were responsible for Tues-

day night's tragedy, the irony is that the original justification for the US forces' presence was to protect their Shia co-religionists in southern Iraq. That further suggests that radicals within Saudi Arabia, rather than the Iranians, were to blame.

Although the Western air forces have been monitoring Iraqi movements since early 1991, they have maintained a low profile, primarily to assuage Saudi sensitivities about a large Western presence.

The US has about 5,000 military personnel in Saudi Arabia, 2,500 of them based around Dhahran, involved in operation "Southern Watch".

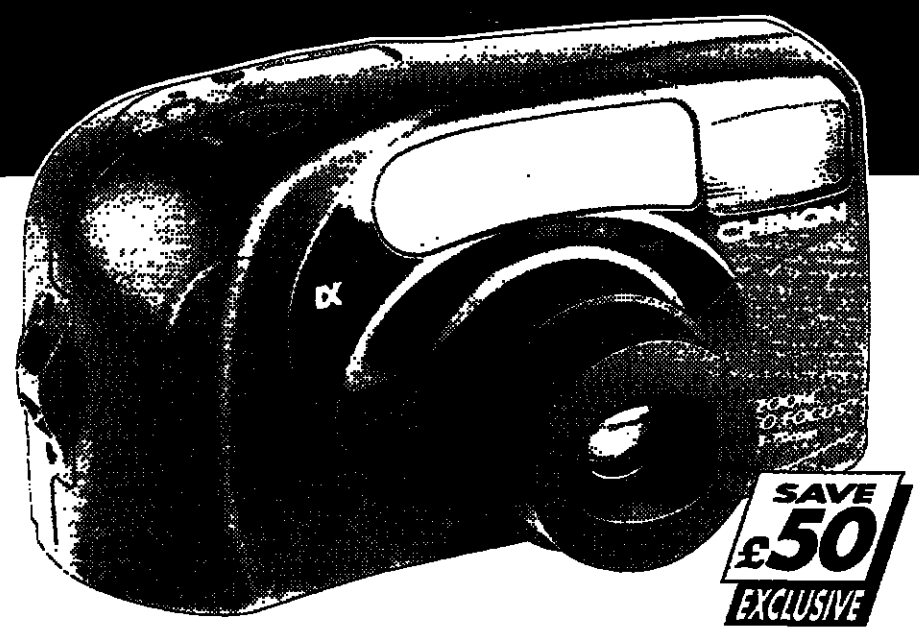
The US Air Force has two squadrons of F-16 Fighting Falcons, one of F-15 Eagles, two of C-130 Hercules transport planes and one of EF-111 electronic warfare planes. It also has a battalion of Patriot anti-aircraft and anti-missile missiles and a signals battalion.

There are about 200 RAF personnel at Dhahran supporting six Tornados GR-1 reconnaissance and ground attack planes. The French have about 150 people supporting six Mirage 2000s.

In addition to the Western military presence, there are thousands of expatriate workers from Western industrial firms based close to the military units.

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Food for thought

Why Western troops kept a low profile

international

Papandreou funeral: Country grinds to halt for lavish public tribute to turbulent statesman

Tears and drama as Greeks say farewell

ANDREW GUMBLE
Athens

It was a funeral to fit all the self-aggrandising rhetoric and contradictory passions of the man himself. Yesterday, Greece paid a lavish, tearful farewell to its towering political personality, Andreas Papandreou, with the same mix of grand spectacle, low political skulduggery and family jealousies that punctuated his long, turbulent life.

The country ground to a halt for the day as politicians, foreign dignitaries and thousands of admirers converged on Athens for the first state funeral to be held in Greece since the death of King Paul in 1963. Dense crowds squeezed along the narrow streets leading from Athens' Metropolitan Cathedral, where Mr Papandreou received his last honours, to the city's main cemetery where he was finally laid to rest.

"Andreas, you live, you are the one who guides us!" chanted the crowd as a seemingly endless sea of dignitaries, brightly-uniformed soldiers and politicians paraded through the hot streets of the capital. Mourners threw handfuls of rose petals down from apartment buildings, forming a carpet of red and pink on top of the Greek flag covering the bier. Right and left were rows of huge wreaths of flowers sent from well-wishers around the world.

For all his faults - and there were many - Mr Papandreou proved yesterday just how deeply the Greeks loved him for his populism, his determination to keep up at least a semblance of independence from foreign allies, and even for the all-too-human frailty he showed over money and beautiful women.

"For me, Papandreou is the embodiment of our transition

from dictatorship to democracy. He made Greece excited about its role in the world, refusing to let the country become just another homogeneous adjunct of the west. It may all have been an illusion, but it was a beautiful illusion," one mourner said.

The drama was not without its quirks, however. Just off the main funeral route, a clutch of hamburger- and soft-drink sellers gave the proceedings the whiff of an oriental bazaar. Scruffy young men picked up the red roses that mourners had brought to place on Mr Papandreou's coffin and resold them for a tidy profit.

As befitted a man famous for cultivating strange allies, the guest list included a group of Kurdish freedom fighters (applauded by the anti-Turkish crowd) and Iran's Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Velayati. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin represented the United States, a country with whom Mr Papandreou conducted a lifelong love-hate relationship. Britain sent the Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Portillo.

The dignitaries crammed into the tiny cathedral to hear eulogies from family, friends and political leaders. And it was here that the games and subtle attempts at one-upmanship began. Members of Pasok, the Socialist movement Mr Papandreou founded in 1974, could barely contain their rivalries on the eve of a congress to designate the old man's successor as president of the party.

Costas Simitis, a noted dissenter from Mr Papandreou's autocratic leadership style, who took over as Prime Minister in January, did his best to sound statesmanlike as he called for party unity - a coded pitch for his own campaign to become



Brief: One of the Orthodox clergy who officiated at the funeral walks past mourners' wreaths Photograph: Reuters

leader. "Pasok has lost its founder, but not its soul. He has brought us face to face with our responsibilities, and we will prove ourselves equal to the challenge," Mr Simitis said.

Mr Papandreou's more unambiguous acolytes, including Mr Simitis' main rival for the party leadership, Akis Tsochopoulos, adopted a more emotional tone, addressing the deceased in the second person and wallowing in memories of

grand party battles and moments of personal intimacy. The contrast in styles could not have been more orchestrated.

It was the family, though, that created the greatest drama. Mr Papandreou's flamboyant young widow, Mimi, dissolved into tears without fail whenever a television camera came close.

At the end of the service she prostrated herself full-length

over her husband's coffin to give him one last hug and whisper: "My love! My love!"

Mr Papandreou's first wife, Margaret, clearly disapproved of such histrionics and made strenuous efforts to be more dignified, holding back her tears and simply resting her forehead on the coffin. Margaret and the four Papandreou children later retired to the home they all once shared in the Athenian suburb of Kastrì to receive

mourners, leaving Mimi to go home to her lavish villa.

The gossip rags got new grist for their mill from the dead man's half-brother, George. His oration reduced the assembled company to a stunned silence. "I always loved you," he said. "But you never explained why you didn't love me. I love you all the same." There's probably enough family strife behind those three lines to fill a television mini-series.

Cold War agent jailed

Bonn - Protesting his innocence to the last, Karl Wienand, a former Social Democrat politician was sentenced yesterday to two and a half years in jail and fined 1m German marks for passing secrets to East Germany's security service, the Stasi, writes Imre Karacs.

Wienand, 69, was parliamentary whip during the reign of

Willy Brandt. Düsseldorf's high court ruled that Wienand had, for over 20 years, kept the Communist regime informed of Bonn's strategy towards the east, in return for some DM1m.

Wienand is appealing against the verdict, claiming his meetings with a Stasi agent who he thought was an East German government official had been above board.

Row over FBI files rumbles on

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

The Clinton White House official in the eye of the FBI files storm resigned yesterday, insisting nonetheless that the affair was just a bureaucratic blunder and not a sinister Democratic attempt to gather background dirt on Republican political opponents.

Testifying at heated, bitterly partisan Congressional hearings into what has become a major election year embarrassment for the Clinton campaign, Craig Livingstone, head of the White House personnel security office, said the request for confidential FBI background files in late 1993 on more than 400 people - including some prominent Republicans - had been an innocent mistake, based on outdated lists of White House pass-holders compiled by the Secret Service. He denied he had ever been asked for, or requested himself, any such list. "But I am tendering my resignation, effective immediately."

But his departure will not end the controversy, fuelled by new allegations that files on not 400, but 700 individuals were requested and received from the FBI. Furthermore, the files are said to have included IRS tax documents, whose possession by unauthorised individuals is a criminal offence.

Republicans insist that the affair shows flagrant ineptitude on the part of the White House, questioning how a political operative and former restaurant bouncer such as Mr Livingstone could be put in charge of so sensitive a matter. Secret Service officials deny they provided out of date lists of Bush officials who had left office in January 1993.

Ben Hur gay slur drives Heston crazy

Los Angeles - It is unclear whether this is a declaration of peace, or yet another act of war. Charlton Heston, in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, has called for an end to a "grossly overworked discussion" over the making of *Ben Hur*, a dispute which has pitted the conservative actor in a gladiatorial mad-fight with the left-wing writer Gore Vidal.

In more ways than one, the film is ancient history. It won 11 Academy Awards, the all-time record, in 1959. But the pair crossed swords when Vidal, in a television documentary on gay and lesbian images in film, claimed to have written a scene into *Ben Hur* - without Heston's knowledge - with clear homosexual overtones. They have been at it ever since.

Heston, who won the Oscar for best actor as the Jewish charioteer, dismissed Vidal's story. He accused him of making extravagant claims of authorship on a film script in which he played no part. It is plain that Vidal has delighted in irritating Heston. These days the actor, a close friend of the falling former president Ronald Reagan, is best known as a public spokesman for the National Rifle Association. At the NRA's convention this April, where the theme was reaching out to youth, images of Heston were shown on two huge video screens, intercut with a procession of young people, the new generation of gun-owning Americans. "There can be no torch to pass on where there is no flame," he intoned.

While Heston was one of the biggest stars of the 1950s, he does not seem to be remembered with great fondness. There is no "Heston" section in the shelves of Los Angeles video stores, as there is for most other leading actors. His films appear mostly under "Epics".

Screen credits for film writing are closely guarded by the Writers' Guild of America, and Vidal was not considered for one in *Ben Hur*. But he was apparently one of several writers enlisted to massage the script. Interviewed for the documentary "The Celluloid Closet", he said he persuaded the director to live up the relationship between Ben Hur and his Roman rival, Massala, with a scene where Massala, played by Stephen Boyd, casts longing glances at Heston as they sip wine.

The sub-text, driving the scene but which was never made explicit, was that the two characters had been teenage lovers and that Massala wanted to kiss and make up. That was explained to Boyd but kept secret from Heston, who would have "fallen apart".

Row over whether charioteer was in the closet may not be over, writes Tim Cornwell

The story is not new, but repetition outraged Heston. He claimed Vidal was brought on to the set for a three-day trial run, after which all his suggested scenes were thrown out. "The story irritates the hell out of me," he added. Vidal responded by calling the actor's performances "astounding wooden", and each accused the other of playing fast and loose with the truth.



Heston: He denies Vidal had any hand in the script

Undeniably, film-makers in the 1950s were forced to dance around the topic of homosexuality. Censors at the Production Code Administration prohibited films from mentioning it. If certain characters were acceptably limp-wristed, they were never gay.

These days cross-dressing is almost standard fare - witness *Mrs Doubtfire*, or recently *The Bird Cage*, the Americanised *La Cage aux Folles*. Tom Hanks took on Aids in *Philadelphia*. But gay overtones can still be a sensitive subject. The *Cable Guy*, starring Jim Carrey, is provoking a lot of talk at the moment. Carrey plays "the cable guy" who comes to the home of Steven, played by Matthew Broderick, to install his cable television. He proceeds not just to fix his cable, but to fix his life. But largely papered over are the homosexual implications of Carrey's desperate desire or Steven to be his friend. He is psychotically jealous. For Hollywood, gayness is still not a comfortable theme.

While Heston has called for peace, it may not be quite so last round. He took another dig at Vidal by advising him, in the words of his friend, Mr Reagan, that "facts are stubborn things". It seems unlikely the Mr Vidal will let that go without a final burst of repartee.



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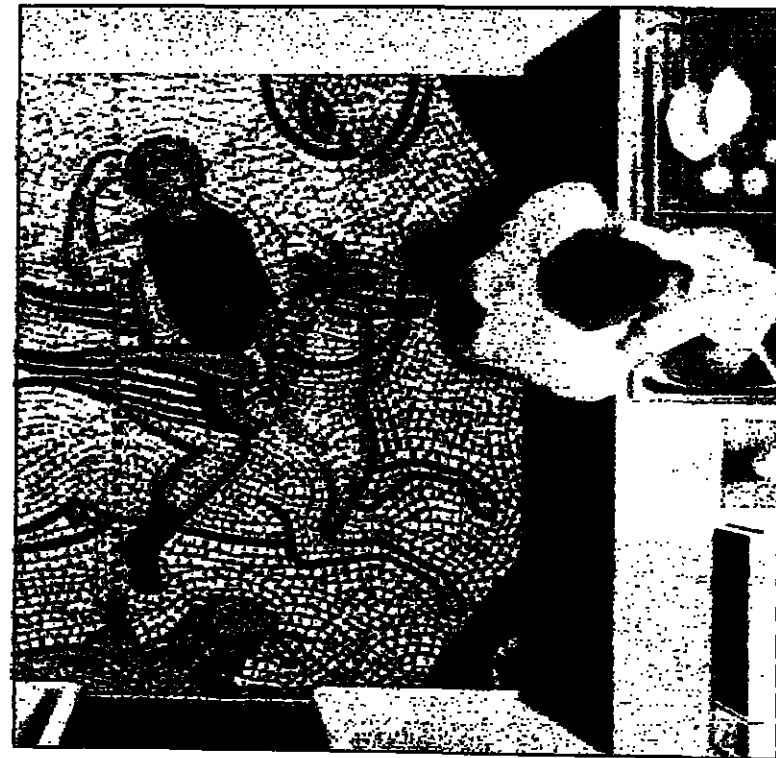
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Chirac puts jobs on summit agenda

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

As the city of Lyon made its final preparations yesterday for receiving the leaders of the world's richest nations at the annual summit of the Group of Seven industrialised countries, France underlined its desire to see two subjects figure prominently in the discussions: aid to less developed countries, and unemployment.

The first is an interest and alignment it shares with Japan and Canada; the second, however, reflects a large element of domestic political self-interest. For France, unlike Britain and the United States, still faces an acute unemployment problem, and one which seems not to be responding to government-prescribed treatment.

Official figures announced this week showed that unemployment in April rose to the second-highest level ever, with some 3.15 million people, or 12.3 per cent of the population of working age, now registered as unemployed.

On Tuesday, the defence ministry announced that the naval dockyards are to lose more than 6,000 jobs - around a quarter of the workforce - by the end of 1998, as a result of cuts in government defence spending and plans for restructuring the defence sector.

The Defence Minister, Charles Millon, yesterday repeated a pledge he gave a

month ago, that there would be no compulsory redundancies. The cuts will none the less severely hit the ports of Brest and Cherbourg. An MP for a northern French constituency, Yves Bonnet, staged a sit-in through the night at the defence ministry in protest against the cuts.

The hitherto protected defence sector is not the only area where jobs are being lost. Earlier this week the troubled bank Credit Lyonnais announced it was to shed more than 6,000 jobs. The building industry has also announced large-scale cuts, because the housing market has failed to pick up significantly, despite a series of government incentives.

To France's few out and out free-marketters, the current wave of job losses is a sign that French industry may finally be grappling with the overmanning and inefficient job practices that have sapped profitability. In France, however, there is a fear that the cuts will not only reflect poorly on a government pledged to reduce unemployment, but could sap morale and impede the long-heralded recovery.

Which is why President Chirac is so keen to ensure that unemployment and possible remedies figure prominently at Lyon, even though he risks a lecture from the Americans and the British about the high price of labour in France and the conservatism of the French labour market.



People queuing to vote in Durban as the KwaZulu-Natal area held local elections yesterday. Amid heavy security, South Africa's most turbulent region voted without incident. While the poll is for local officials

only, results will be a significant barometer of the strength of the nation's two leading black parties - Nelson Mandela's African National Congress and the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party of Mangosuthu

Buthelesi. The ANC and Inkatha have fought for control of the Zulu heartland for 12 years. More than 14,000 people have died in the conflicts.

Photograph: Juda Ngwenya/Reuters

Smoking ads take the biscuit

Paris — A biscuit a day may not keep the doctor away, but it is still a better health bet than a cigarette, even someone else's cigarette, writes Mary Dejevsky.

This is the verdict of a French court, which yesterday banned a series of controversial advertisements for the tobacco conglomerate, Philip Morris, which appeared to suggest biscuits could be more dangerous to health than passive smoking.

For two weeks, Philip Morris Europe has been running newspaper advertisements in France and elsewhere (including Britain), designed to challenge the notion of "passive smoking". In France, where smoking is more widespread than in Britain, the adverts took up a full page of the national daily papers.

One advert, headed "Life is full of risks - but they are not all the same", included a large picture of three biscuits. The text beneath cited the results of a US Environmental Protection Agency investigation which, it said, put certain "everyday" health risks higher than that of "passive smoking", including "eating a biscuit a day".

France's National Union of Biscuitmakers took umbrage and took the advertising agency to court. The judge decided in their favour, awarded them token damages of one franc, and banned the Philip Morris advertisements.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Afghanistan's opposition Taleban militia marked the return to Kabul of the guerrilla leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar with a ferocious bombardment that killed at least 32 people and wounded about 100. Government officials welcomed Mr Hekmatyar, their former enemy, into the city along with a 100-vehicle convoy of his flag-waving supporters, and President Burhanuddin Rabbani swore him in as prime minister, 30 months after he tried to seize Kabul in an abortive coup. Mr Hekmatyar spent nearly two years bombarding Kabul before being dislodged by the Taleban movement. Now he has formed an alliance with the government against the Taleban, which has been besieging Kabul since October. *Islamabad - Reuters*

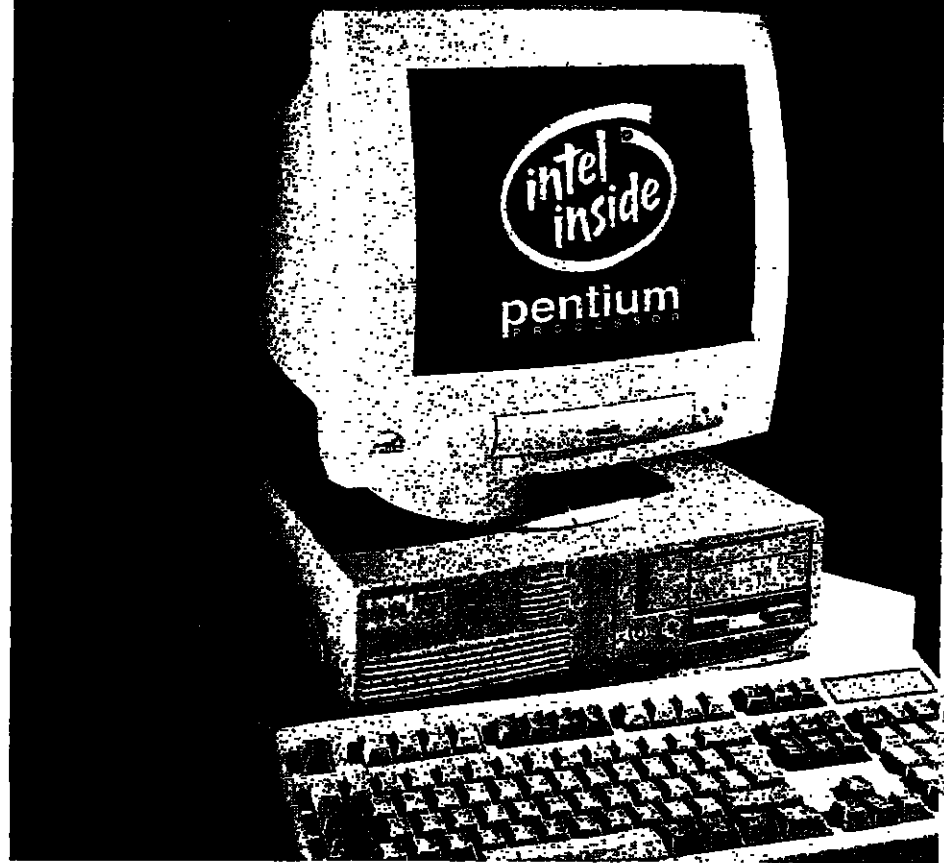
The Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, the key obstacle to holding free elections, offered to resign, but attached conditions he knew the international community would not swallow. The manoeuvring at an all-night crisis meeting of the Bosnian Serb leadership seemed to be a last attempt by the defiant Mr Karadzic, a suspected war criminal, to retain power ahead of a 1 July deadline the world has set for him to quit. His departure would remove a major roadblock before elections in Bosnia in September. Belgrade's independent VIP newsletter said Mr Karadzic signed a document saying he would resign, but only if the international community granted his Bosnian Serb republic *de facto* recognition, which it will not do. *AP - Pale*

More than 100 Central African immigrants who were flown from Spain's Moroccan enclave of Melilla to the mainland last Friday following a riot were secretly expelled from the country hours later, the Spanish Interior Ministry said yesterday. Refugee welfare organisations yesterday condemned the secrecy with which the authorities deported the undocumented immigrants to Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Cameroon. Melilla's Human Rights Association accused the authorities of illegally detaining Central Africans. *Elizabeth Nash - Madrid*

Italian police arrested Candeloro Parrello, reputed boss of the 'Ndrangheta organised crime group of Italy's southern Calabria region. They said the 40-year-old Mr Parrello had been living in an elegant Rome flat under a false name for several months, and had undergone plastic surgery. Investigators did not immediately disclose how they had tracked down the suspect, who was wanted on several charges of Mafia association and arms and drug trafficking. Parrello gave up when police stormed his apartment. He initially showed the officers a false passport but was arrested without incident. *Rome - Reuters*

O J Simpson is reaching out to Los Angeles' black community with a fund-raiser at his estate today for Stop the Violence - Increase the Peace, a group working with gang members and victims of domestic abuse. Mr Simpson's plans for a reception, with suggested donations of up to \$10,000, have won the blessing of African American community leaders, but critics called the event "ghoulish", and women's groups promised a counter-rally. A judge in the civil law suit brought against Mr Simpson by the families of his ex-wife Nicole and her friend Ronald Goldman, brought after a jury found him not guilty of their murders last year, has ruled against him on a key issue. Judge Alan Haber said Mr Simpson's attorneys must explain exactly how they believe evidence against him, including blood found in his bedroom and Bronco truck, was planted. The case is set to go to trial in September. *The Guardian - Los Angeles*

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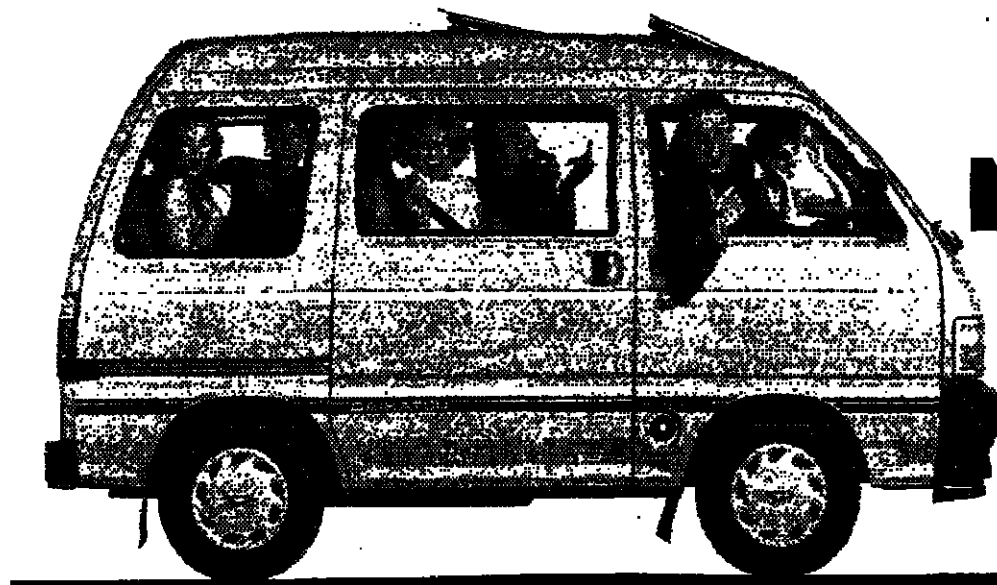
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obituaries / gazette

Ray Howard-Jones

Anyone who has ever spent holidays on the Dyfed coast may have encountered a naked woman emerging from behind the rocks. The chances are this was Ray Howard-Jones, woman war artist and painter in the Romantic tradition – best known to her friends as “Ray the Painter”.

She was born in Berkshire, in 1903, at her father's racing stable on the downs. At two she moved to her grandfather's home in Penarth and it was there that she spent her childhood, sketching the shores of the Bristol Channel. At 12 her guardian, “Putty” Purcell, took her to Tenby, where she made her first serious seascape study, and fell in love with the coast of west Wales.

In 1920 she was granted a place at the Slade School of Art, London. Three years later she achieved a London University Fine Art Diploma, gaining distinctions in painting, wood engraving and design. Her oil *Christ on the Road to Calvary* won the summer composition prize. When presenting the award the Slade Professor, Henry Tonks, turned to his colleague Philip Wilson Steer to remark: “There is only one man in the world to whose work I would defer [i.e. Steer himself] and he tells me that this painter is the finest colourist we have ever produced at the Slade.” From that time this quarter helped inspire an extraordinary single-minded artistic career.

In the immediate pre-war years Howard-Jones worked for the National Museum of Wales producing archaeological reconstruction drawings for the published works of Sir Cyril Fox and Dr Nash-Williams. In 1942 she was determined to make her contribution to the war effort and began painting around the Cardiff and Barry docks. The following year she received a commission to record the fortified islands of Flat Holm and Steep Holm in the Bristol Channel, thus achieving the distinction of becoming one of



Howard-Jones sketching below her cottage at Martin's Haven, Dyfed, 1970 Photograph: Roger Worsley

a handful of women who became accredited war artists. Her paintings depicting preparations of D-Day shipping in Cardiff are now in the collection of the Imperial War Museum.

In 1947 Ray Howard-Jones moved to Ravenscourt Park in west London. Her house there was to be her home and studio for the rest of her life. From this base she took her annual pilgrimages to the coast of Dyfed, from 1949 until 1992. For the first nine years she stayed on the deserted island of Skomer with her partner, the photographer Raymond Moore. The two Rays shared a close relationship for 20 years, and it was during their first decade together that she began her earnest exploration of the history and mysticism of the Welsh landscape.

In 1958 Howard-Jones was commissioned to design a mosaic for Thomson House, Cardiff, the offices of the Western Mail, a colourful, semi-abstract design incorporating flying newspapers. More success followed in 1959 with her first full-scale show at the Leicester Galleries in London, the first in a series of five shows over the next 10 years which brought her acclaim on the national art scene. Although an oil painter of great skill, her true artistic spirit and style came out best in her use of gouache and pastel, and it was this medium that she increasingly devoted herself to.

She could work quickly and out of doors. Many of her works depict her beloved Easter Bay (her name for Martin's Haven, close to the village of Marloes). She felt an affinity with the steep cliffs, which she was still climbing at the age of 89, and the rocks to which she gave private names – “Te Deum”, “The Brother”, “Cathedral of the Sea”. Here too she could swim with the seals.

During her lifetime, Ray Howard-Jones's work featured in almost 30 one-man shows in British art galleries and was represented in public collections world-wide, including the Na-

Salah Abu-Seif was known as the father of realism in Egypt's film industry, which controls the cinematic taste of some 150 million Arab-speaking filmgoers and television viewers in the Middle East and beyond.

His legacy of 41 motion pictures transformed Arabic-speaking film. His ideas and cinematography have been emulated over the past 20 years throughout the Middle East, especially in Syria and Tunisia where there are budding film industries, by two generations of film-makers – many of whom were among Abu-Seif's students at the Egyptian Film Institute which he helped to establish in 1960.

Abu-Seif was born in 1915, in Cairo's ancient quarter of Boulaq, to landowning parents from Upper Egypt. He was 12 years old when he saw the first full-length feature film made by an Egyptian, in 1927, at a local movie-house – earlier films were imports accompanied by Egyptian narrators, or made by Europeans living in Egypt.

As the son of a conservative

Salah Abu-Seif

family, Abu-Seif graduated from the Cairo College of Commerce and Economics in 1932, while at the same time working as a freelance reporter following movie stars. But it was at his day job as a clerk in a factory that he met the Egyptian film-maker Niaz Mustafa, who was on a shoot there. Mustafa made him a film editor.

In 1939, Abu-Seif won a scholarship to study film in Paris. Within five years of his return in 1942, he had established himself as one of the most avant-garde second generation film-makers in the country. He pioneered shooting on location – though he also used re-constructions – in places none of his predecessors had dared to visit, like *ghurza* (the equivalent of old Chinese opium dens), brothels and impoverished areas whose existence had never been officially acknowledged.

His choice of bold subjects like polygamy in Islamic society and corruption among the clergy brought him into conflict with the Al-Azhar, the official Muslim Church in Egypt. His first film, *Number 6* (1942), a black comedy about the financial exploitation of families hit by a sudden death, was banned after the subject offended the sensibility of the Muslim majority. Such harsh and absurd censorship engraved itself on Abu-Seif's mind: on his 80th birthday last year he decided to retire, saying he would only return to film-making when the censorship board passed his proposed new script. He did, however, re-

Ande Anderson

Ande Anderson spent virtually his entire working life at Covent Garden.

After war service with the West African Frontier Force and two years as stage director for Ensa in Bombay, in 1948 he joined the stage management department of the fledgling Covent Garden Opera Company (which later became the Royal Opera), becoming stage manager and assistant to the resident producer in 1956. Two years later he was raised to assistant producer, then in 1959 became resident producer, a post he held until 1972, when he became director of productions. From 1979 to 1982 he was general manager of the Royal Opera Company and even after his retirement from that post continued to work as a freelance director.

As resident producer, Anderson was responsible for the revivals of operas originally staged by star directors such as Visconti and Zeffirelli, as well as the more humdrum productions of now long-forgotten directors. To both of these categories he devoted great care and as much time (never sufficient) as he was allowed.

Staff producers have a thankless task: if they alter the original staging, people are sure to complain; if they do not correct their predecessors' mistakes, people will complain even more. It was only after his retirement from Covent Garden that Ande Anderson was properly appreciated. While he worked there, soloists that distinguished later stagings of *Don Carlos* and *Elly Budd* did not occur; no ladies accompanied Elisabeth de Valois into the Monastery of San Yuse, where the Queen of Spain was the only female permitted to enter; the officers on board HMS *Indomitable* did not rise to drink the King's health (naval officers had a special dispensation to remain seated, as cabin bulkheads were so low).

Anderson also worked for other organisations: he directed *Semele* (1959) and *Hercules* (1960) for the Handel Opera Society at Sadler's Wells, while



Anderson: staff producer Photograph: Reg Wilson

for Audrey Langford's enterprising Kentish Opera Group, which performed at the Civic Hall, Orpington, he directed Menotti's *The Old Maid and the Thief* (1960) and *The Saint of Bleecker Street* (1962), both British premieres. He staged Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* and a double bill of Mozart's *Bastien and Bastienne* together with Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* at Llandan in Scotland in 1966, and the following year directed successful productions of Berlioz's *Bernier et Bénédict* and Weber's *Oberon* for Cambridge University Opera.

At Covent Garden Anderson was occasionally given a production of his own. In 1965 he staged Puccini's trio of one-act operas *Il tritico*, of which only *Il tabarro* and *Suor Angelica* were brand new. *Gianci Schicchi* was the reworking of a production by Peter Ustinov from 1962. I remember *Il tabarro* as particularly enjoyable, with Tito Gobbi, Marie Collier and Charles Craig in the principal roles. Then in 1968 Anderson directed a new production (the second) of Tippet's *Midsummer Marriage*, while the same year he was landed with Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* which used various bits of scenery discarded from other operas. The audience was surprised to recognise Brinnhilde's rock from *The Ring* in the final act.

However, revivals are the resident producer's chief job and Anderson was responsible, throughout the Sixties and Seventies, for a great many of these: Visconti's productions of *Don Carlos*, *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*; Zeffirelli's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Rigoletto*, *Falstaff*, *Comedia rustica*, *Pagliacci*; *Camille* and *Tosca* were treated with the love and respect that they deserved, as was the *Fidelio* directed as well as conducted by the veteran Otto Klemperer. Many revivals, including *The Queen of Spades*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *Carmen*, *Wozzeck*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Otello* and *Jenafu* were, as I recall, greatly improved by his restaging, while *Madama Butterfly*, *Elektra* and *Salome* were virtu-

Veronica Guerin

The crime reporter Veronica Guerin, who was gunned down in an apparent reprisal attack by Dublin gangland assassins yesterday, was as fearless a reporter as it was possible to imagine. She had also crammed careers in business and politics, and a family, into her 36 years.

She first appeared at the *Independent's* Dublin office in early 1991, a doughty and sharp-witted character, where she was to be based for most of the next 18 months while writing freelance for Irish newspapers and reporting for the Irish television service RTE.

She came from a large Donegal and Dublin family and grew up in the Arntine district in north Dublin. Though a late entrant to journalism, she made up for this with a driven energy. Conversations were invariably interrupted by her two telephones. Few days passed without her making 50 or 60 calls.

Initially, she used her accountant's training and business expertise to take fraud reporting to a new level of detail – she had earlier worked in PR and in travel businesses. Damien Kiberd, her then editor on the *Sunday Business Post* in Dublin, said, “I have never met a reporter so unrelenting in pursuit of a story.” She would fly off at minimal notice to South Africa, London or Nigeria to pursue a key witness.

The strength of her approach was also her biggest risk. She craved first-hand detail and showed little regard for her personal safety in chasing those she deemed central to a story. Gardaí and police forces abroad respected her diligence and gave her detailed information.

She made the acquaintance of many of Dublin's most active professional criminals. Her subjects ranged from Tipperary farmers who dabbled in high and dubious finance, to heads of long-standing armed robbery families to the major heroin dealers in Ireland. She had also become involved in reporting IRA activity.

She was politically well-connected, serving as personal assistant to the then Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey in 1983



Guerin: 'unrelenting'

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS
MILLER, Harold, beloved husband of Wendy, died in Southampton General Hospital, on 22 June. Private cremation. Donations to British Heart Foundation, 33 High Street, Thorcutt TN5 7AS.

MEMORIAL SERVICES
MALLETT, A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Peter Mallett will be held on Tuesday 27 July at 12 noon in the Church of St. Mary, Biddenden, Kent. The service will be held at 12 noon in the Church of St. Mary, Biddenden, Kent. The service will be held at 12 noon in the Church of St. Mary, Biddenden, Kent.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, will visit the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11 June. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, will visit the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11 June. The Duke of Edinburgh, Prince of Wales, will visit the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11 June.

Forthcoming marriages
Mr T. G. Deakin and Miss S. E. J. Wray. The engagement is announced between Terence Gordon, only son of Edith Ellen (Bunny) and the late Wallace Gordon Deakin, of Park Street, St Albans, and Susan (Sugar), only daughter of Richard and Pamela Wray, of Ipswich. The wedding will take place at Holy Trinity Church, Frognore, on 3 August 1996, at 11am.

Birthdays
Mr Michael Alison MP, Second Church Estates Commissioner, 70; The Right Rev Leonard Ashton, Honorary Assistant Bishop of Oxford, 81; Mr Eustace Brathwaite, writer and diplomat, 74; Mr Tommy Cannon, comedian, 58; Mr David Cleland MP, 53; Mr Alan Cohen, author, journalist and broadcaster, 58; The Most Rev Maurice Courde de Marville, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, 67; Miss Brenda Cowdery, former general secretary, 71; Professor Michael Dummett, Wykeham Professor Emeritus of Logic, Oxford University, 71; Miss Shirley Ann Field, actress, 58; Mr Robin Guthrie, director of Social and Economic Affairs, Council of Europe, 59; Vice-Admiral Sir Roy Halliday, 73; Mr Rupert Hambro, former group managing director, J.O. Hambro, 53; Lord Hope of Craighead, Lord Justice-General of Scotland, 58; Mr Bruce Johnston, singer, 52; Mr Ian Lang MP, President of the Board of Trade, 55; Mr Bruce McGowan,

former Headmaster, Haberdashers' Aske's School, 72; Miss Muriel Pavlow, actress, 74; Mr Eric Richard, actor, 56; Dr Thurstan Shaw, archaeologist, 82; The Very Rev Alan Warren, Provost Emeritus of Leicester, 64; Mr William Wilson, Chief Constable, Central Scotland, 53; Mr Hugh Wood, composer, 54; Mr Terence Wynn, MEP, 50.

Anniversaries
Births: Charles Stewart Parnell, Irish nationalist leader, 1846; Sir John Monash, engineer and general, 1865; Helen Adams Keller, blind, deaf and mute scholar and teacher, 1880. Deaths: James Lewis Macie Smithson, scientist and founder of the Smithsonian Institution, 1829; Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), murdered in prison 1844. On this day: the *Ladies' Mercury*, the first women's magazine, was issued, 1693; Bonnie Prince Charlie, disguised as a maid, escaped to Skye, 1746; the first nuclear power station was opened at Obninsk, near Moscow, 1954. Today is the Feast Day of St Cyril of Alexandria, St George Missandini, St John of Chinos, St Ladislav, King of Hungary, St Samsom of Constantinople, The Martyrs of Aras and St Zolius of Cordova.

Lectures
National Gallery: Jacqueline Lewis, “Late Greats (iv): Gainsborough, *Ms Siddons*”, 1pm. Tate Gallery: David Rhodes, “Body Language: Bruce Nauman”, 1pm. British Museum: Stuart Blackburn, “The Rams Story in the Shadow Puppet Theatre of South India”, 1.15pm.

Luncheon
Mid-Atlantic Club / English-Speaking Union. Mr Peter Mandelson MP was the guest of honour and speaker at a luncheon held jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Club and the English-Speaking Union yesterday at the English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, London W1. He spoke about his book, *The Blair Revolution: can New Labour deliver?* Mr Alan Lee Williams was in the chair.

Foundation for Science and Technology
Lord Butler was in the chair at a lecture and dinner discussion held yesterday evening at the Royal Society, London SW1. Professor Sir Robert May, Professor G.K. Radda and Mr John Parry spoke on “A Forward Look at Science, Technology and Engineering”.

Leonard Cheshire Foundation
The Annual General Meeting of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation was held yesterday at the Foundation's headquarters, London SW1. The appointment of Baroness Ryder of Wanslet as the Foundation's first President was announced. Lady Ryder, founder of the Sue Ryder Foundation, is the widow of the late Gp Capt Leonard Cheshire VC.

Mortgage set aside for undue influence

LAW REPORT

27 June 1996

Credit Lyonnais Bank Nederland NV v Burch; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Nourse, Lord Justice Millett, Lord Justice Swinton Thomas) 20 June 1996

A relationship of trust and confidence between an employee and her employer was capable of giving rise to a presumption of undue influence in the context of a mortgage entered into by the employee as security for the employer's debts.

The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by the plaintiff, Credit Lyonnais Bank Nederland NV, against the decision of Mr Recorder Harrod, sitting in Willesden County Court on 13 November 1995, who dismissed the bank's claim against the defendant, Helen Burch. The claim was for possession of her flat and repayment of debts under a mortgage entered into as security for the debts of her employer, Andrea Pelosi, and his company, AP International Travel Ltd (API).

Kathryn Parkis (Blake Lopham & Co. Solicitors) for the bank; Yvonne Green (Beauchamps) for Miss Burch.

Lord Justice Nourse said that Miss Burch, then aged 18, began working for Mr Pelosi in 1982. He was 10 years older and she trusted him. As well as working for him by day, she did baby-sitting at his home in the evenings and visited the family at weekends and for holidays in Italy.

In June 1990 his tour operating company, API, for which she was then working, was in financial difficulties. Mr Pelosi asked her to put up her flat, which she had bought in 1985, as collateral security for API's overdraft to enter into the legal charge. She agreed to do so.

The bank's solicitors, Belmont & Lowe, wrote to Miss Burch, advising her to take separate legal advice about the documents she would sign and the potential risks of doing so.

Miss Burch wrote back stating she was fully aware of the implications of the transaction. “I also understand that such guarantee is unlimited both in time and amount, and I wish to offer such guarantee on this basis.”

The recorder found that Mr Pelosi had either prepared her reply or told her what to say.

The transaction was duly completed on 3 August 1990. The obligations assumed by Miss Burch were onerous in the extreme.

API's financial difficulties were not resolved and it went into liquidation. Mr Pelosi's house was sold and he went to live in Italy. The bank, having unsuccessfully pursued him for the company's debts, proceeded against Miss Burch.

In her defence she alleged, *inter alia*, that she had been induced to enter into the legal charge through the undue influence which Mr Pelosi had exerted over her, and that the bank or its solicitors were on notice, actual or constructive, of this.

The recorder found that there existed between Mr Pelosi and Miss Burch such a relationship of trust and confidence as to raise a presumption of undue influence. The bank knew that Mr Pelosi was putting forward, as the provider of collateral security for a possible debt of £270,000, an employee of his company who had no interest in it as shareholder or director. He held that that was notice of facts which put the bank on inquiry.

The astonishing feature of this case was that under the terms of the legal charge Miss Burch was required not simply to pledge her home as security for a £20,000 overdraft; she was required to guarantee without limit repayment of all API's borrowings from the bank, past, present and future, together with interest, commission, charges, legal and other costs.

On these facts, a case could well have been made for setting it aside as an unconscionable bargain. The unconscionability of the transaction was still of direct materiality to the case on undue influence. Since it was so manifestly disadvantageous to Miss Burch, the bank could not be said to have taken reasonable steps to avoid being fixed with constructive notice of Mr Pelosi's undue influence over her when neither had the potential extent of her liability been explained to her nor had she received independent advice.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

صلى الله عليه وسلم

Major launches a defence of the indefensible

Last night John Major told Britain he didn't claim to be a constitutional expert; and then, in the course of a lengthy speech, wholly substantiated his claim. Since this speech will help to set the terms of the next election campaign, it deserves close scrutiny. It began from the assumption that the British constitution was "vibrant and robust." We disagree.

To see why we need a roll-call of constitutional change in the Tory years. The powers and relative autonomy of local government have been swept away; under Margaret Thatcher and John Major more than 150 Acts of Parliament diminishing local councils have been passed into law and some £24bn of public expenditure has been moved to unelected quangos. Was this, to quote Mr Major last night, a "footprint in our nation's story" designed to win "the affections of the British people"? Of the 5,520 unelected bodies exercising executive functions on behalf of government, some 4,700 are operating locally. Some have been quietly effective; others have been grotesquely ineffective; almost all lack proper accountability. Is this really "organic" and "wise" evolution? Or is it, rather, a centralist coup?

Two years ago, a shadow system of regional government for England appeared, when 10 senior civil servants were appointed as bureaucratic "viceroys" to oversee policy on trans-

port, the environment, industry and employment, spending some £4bn. Was this wise? Mr Major said yesterday that English regional government was no good, asking, "what are the regions? How do we define them?" Leaving the merits of regionalism aside, he should be aware that his own civil servants have the answer.

Then there are the national quangos which have huge power, such as the Funding Agency for Schools, which can close down schools, open them, change their character, enlarge them or shrink them, without any reference to local people's wishes. This has been described by a free-market theorist as "an extraordinary range of dictatorial powers". Another example of giving people what they want, or the power of the centre?

Then there is Parliament and the ballot, the heart of our democracy. The polls show deep levels of cynicism and hostility to the whole business. Under the first-past-the-post system, very few of us actually shape the result - only those who happen to be swing voters in marginal constituencies. Some party strategists, targeting those voters, reckon that only 500,000 voters really matter. Is it really "pointless fiddling" to reopen the old question about how we vote? Or is it merely inconvenient, if you happen to be a Conservative minister, used to winning power on a minority of the votes cast?



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The Commons itself is the gleaming, glorious cathedral of the Tory case against constitutional change. Yet the Commons has not proven itself to be an effective or vigilant eye over governments; and this government has treated Parliament at times with contempt. It has rammed through complicated and disastrous legislation without proper debate. Bills have arrived at their final stages in ragged and incoherent form. Select committees have been blandly ignored or refused proper account.

MPs have taken money to ask questions. Ministers have misled MPs with-

out apologising, never mind resigning. The administration has moved, increasingly, to reveal important initiatives in radio and television studios, rather than in the chamber. If John Major really feels humbled by the accumulated wisdom and experience of British parliamentarianism, all one can say is that he seems to have a funny way of expressing it.

Last night he said there was no need for a Bill of Rights because it would "diminish Parliament's historic role as the defender of individual freedoms... the supremacy of the elected representatives of the people in Parliament

would - for the first time since the 17th century - be eroded. Is that really the way we want to go?"

This is extraordinary stuff. Mr Major is presumably feigning lack of knowledge of some of the most important constitutional developments under successive Conservative administrations, including the effect of the European Convention on Human Rights and the arrival of European Community law after 1971 which has been, in key respects, supreme. The parliamentary "erosion" Mr Major says he fears in the future is already history, and became so while he was happily in office.

In the Lords, a cast of hereditary peers make us the last country in the world to use bloodstock as part of our legislative process. The upper House should have been properly reformed in 1911, when Britain was promised a second chamber "on a popular instead of a hereditary basis". We are still waiting. Last night the Prime Minister said that the thing about the Lords was that "it works". We wonder how many debates there he has read or sat through recently.

Next comes Scotland. It was the Conservatives who produced a devolved bureaucracy without a legislature in Edinburgh. Throughout the Tory years, the Scots have voted in favour of their own assembly or parliament, by a large margin, consistently and repeatedly. If this is frustrated, it may eventually lead

to a nationalist breakaway. It seems, however, that Scotland's more modest democratic desire is considered less interesting by Mr Major than any anomalies it would create at Westminster. For the Tories, the Scottish majority is merely a British minority which ought to be kept in line.

This doesn't hold for those Irish-British minorities whose political voice has been amplified by bombing and murder; Mr Major's blander explanation of the difference in approach is unconvincing. Last night he asserted that constitutional change "is driven by what people want". That depends, it seems, on where those people live.

The Prime Minister's modest, middle-of-the-road position on European integration was the part of his speech that sounded the most plausible and sensible. But it was like a few calm words spoken in the teeth of an uprising, all around him the Conservative Party is risen on the subject.

None of what he said makes him a cynical man. He was speaking as the leader of a party that has dramatically centralised and commercialised the constitution, ignoring inconvenient facts and people. But he may well not realise how badly damaged our system has become. His speech was a romantic defence of what we believe has become indefensible. It was a rousing call to battle. The only trouble is, it's a battle he richly deserves to lose.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Xenophobia: more sad than serious

Sir: The way in which foreigners, and especially just now Germans, are coarsely mocked in the popular press makes me long for some really distinguished and internationally respected British public figure, - a retired statesman like Douglas Hurd, for example, or Edward Heath - to write an open letter to the editor of a few leading German newspapers explaining that this apparent xenophobia is not as dangerous as it seems, and may be more sad than serious. Such a letter might make these points:

In the ordinary British mind, foreigners seem funny. Our national brands of humour and satire have rested heavily, for hundreds of years, on the perceived funniness of foreigners. This is no doubt rude and regrettable and increasingly risky, now that our country is half-a-century into an era of unstoppable internationalisation, but it is a fact of our insular culture, and one might hopefully reckon that at any rate it is better than finding foreigners, first of all, unpleasant; which I don't believe we any longer do.

Amazing as it may seem, the way in which the Second World War is popularly perceived makes it partly funny too. The references made to the war in tabloid shock tactics is grossly tasteless and must strike Germans as hostile, but I don't believe it usually is meant to be so. Of course it signifies ignorance and irresponsibility and a sort of grown-up childishness, but it can be explained as a consequence of our very peculiar Second World War experience.

Our rather relaxed popular perception of that war is, necessarily, untroubled by recalled direct experience of such unfunny things as totalitarian government, material destruction on scales unexampled even in Coventry and the City of London, casualties on scales unimaginable to ourselves, and finally, the humiliation of enemy occupation.

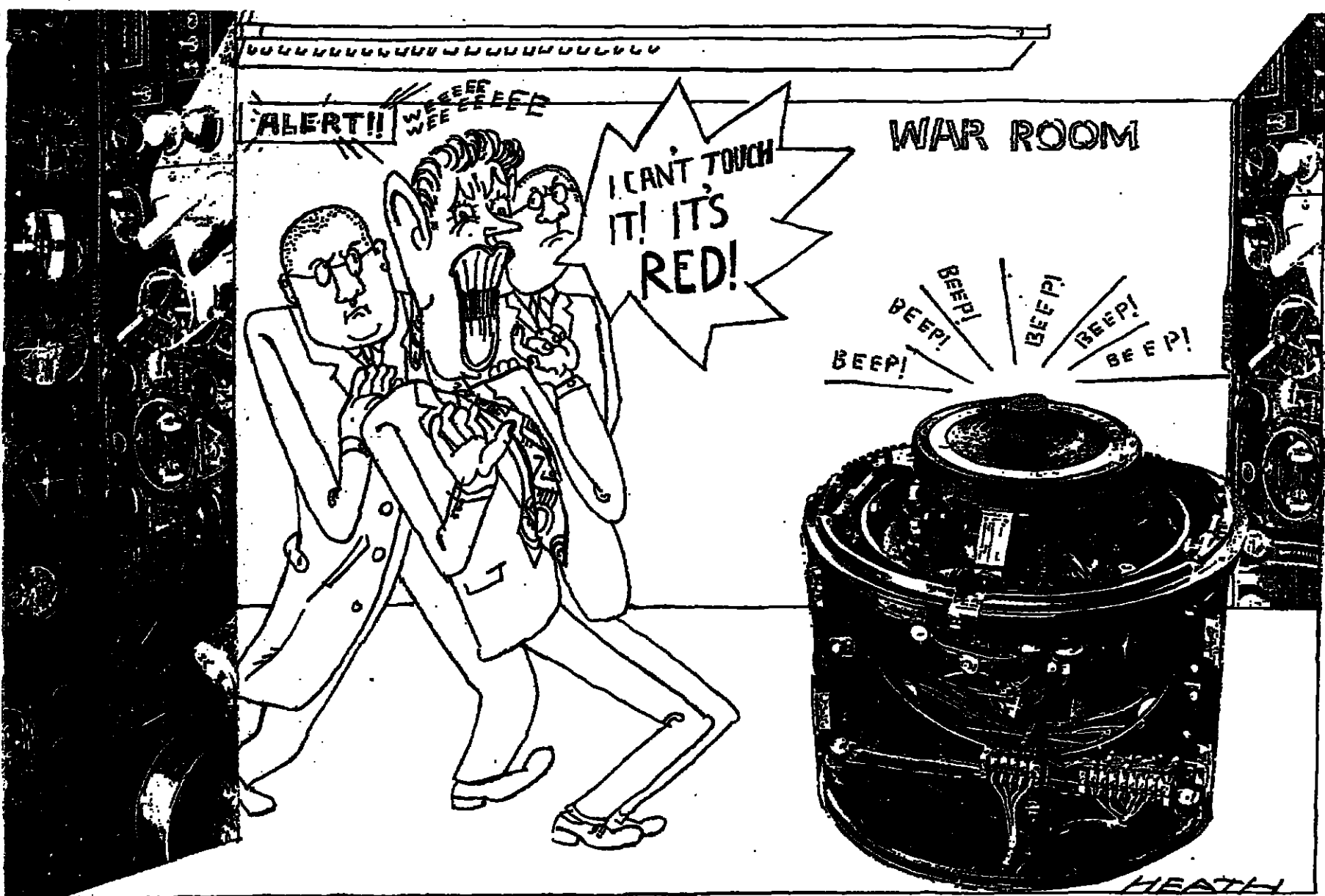
Insular "winners" who happened to do it with relatively little hardship, and who have subsequently been allowed by their governments to saunter untroubled into community with Continental former allies and enemies who, some of them, suffered much more and who cannot find any fun in their memories, must hope for a little sympathetic indulgence.

Of course one would prefer prominent persons in our present government to take the lead in apologising for our xenophobes, but by now I have to believe that the best we can hope for from them is silence.

GEOFFREY BEST
Oxford

Sir: Your front page story strikes exactly the right note ("Don't be beastly to the Germans", 25 June). There is no point inciting xenophobic feelings towards our neighbours and trading partners, and then complaining that the European club constantly seeks to exclude us. It is hypocritical to use the language of the thugs one moment and condemn their violence the next.

The English are world champions when it comes to dreaming nostalgically about golden-ages-that-never-were. We should admire the courage and forward-looking approach of the Germans, who have built a



Blair says he's prepared to press the nuclear button. Or would he?

civilised and prosperous country out of the ruins of 1945. We should be looking to the demanding and challenging future, not indulging in barren, backward-looking jingoism.

Tough, honest competition will characterise our domestic and international future. That will mean playing an intelligent and constructive role within Europe. Ignorance, prejudice and irresponsibility will only ensure that Little England has a little future.

JO GARDINER
Campaign Manager
The Industrial Society
London W1

Sir: This morning I tried an experiment to discover whether the xenophobia of some politicians and tabloid newspapers was having any effect on primary school children ("Don't be beastly to the Germans", 25 June).

At the school assembly I asked those who thought the Germans were our enemies to point in one direction, and those who thought they were our friends to point the other way. The majority of pupils indicated that they thought the Germans were our enemies.

Politicians and newspaper editors need to be aware of the corrupt moral values with which they are infecting our children. They are making the job of responsible teachers and parents impossibly difficult.

Clearly the sins of the fathers are being visited on our children, and stirring up mindless hatred which could cause untold damage in years to come.

The Rev Dr T AMBROSE
Wichford,
Cambridgeshire

Sir: The British public may have been concerned about the German "threat" after 1906 (letters, 22 June) but this attitude did not extend to the lower deck in the Royal Navy.

As any (old) naval officer can tell you, when, between the wars, ships of the Royal Navy and the German Navy were in port together, the ship's companies usually got along famously. But if a ship of the US Navy was also in port, there was fighting in every bar, often with the British and the Germans in alliance.

G P ALLEN
Eaton Bishop, Hereford

Sir: How many Britons have any idea what an utterly disastrous impression the treatment of Euro 96 by the popular press is making abroad. Its coverage is seen to be not just bigoted and ignorant, but positively fascist, in its decision of foreigners simply by virtue of their not being British. In the rest of Europe sport is treated as sport. In Britain we are determined not to shake off the hangover of empire.

Professor HENRY ETTINGHAUSEN
La Perla, Spa

Sir: In these days of "German bashing" I can only congratulate the German government on taking a stand against China by passing a resolution condemning China's human rights abuses in Tibet (report, 24 June). We may want to feel superior to the Germans, but what greater sign of superiority can there be than standing by your convictions, even in the face of losing a substantial trade partner.

JUSTIN SOLOMON
London N22

Rights of asylum seekers

Sir: The Government should not be seeking to amend the Asylum and Immigration Bill now nearing its final stages in the House of Lords ("Lilley attempts to reverse asylum ruling", 25 June). Rather, it should withdraw the Bill entirely and take this opportunity to reflect on and amend its entire approach towards the right of asylum.

In common with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Government's own Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC) and all agencies working with and on behalf of those seeking asylum in the UK, the Court of Appeal has concluded that the Social Security Regulations enacted in February "have the effect of rendering (genuine refugees) ostensible statutory right to a proper consideration of their claims valueless in practice".

Whatever ministers may say about their aim of "discouraging bogus asylum-seekers", the regulations make no attempt to discriminate between genuine and "bogus" asylum claims. Accordingly, and as the Court of Appeal has emphasised, "it can hardly be doubted that some genuine asylum-seekers, as well as bogus ones, are likely to be deterred by penalty from pursuing their claims and thus be forced to return to the very persecution which they have sought to escape."

In response, Mr Lilley has claimed that the Court of Appeal

ruled only on the "narrow" issue that primary legislation should have been used. In fact, the Court's decision was founded on the ground that "rights necessarily implicit in the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 are now inevitably being overborne (by the regulations)" and "Parliament cannot have intended a significant number of genuine asylum-seekers to be impaled on the horns of so intolerable a dilemma: the need either to abandon their claims to refugee status or alternatively to maintain them as best they can but in a state of utter destitution".

The fact that one arm of the Government's two-fold attack on the right of asylum should be found so wanting by the courts raises serious questions about the second: the Asylum and Immigration Bill. As with the regulations, the Bill was introduced without the benefit of prior consultation with those who have to make the asylum process work, let alone a White Paper.

It is the view of many of those with experience of asylum matters that the Bill's provisions are as unworkable as they are unjust. What is needed is a sensible and properly-resourced procedure that can fully resolve asylum cases both fairly and expeditiously - thus minimising the burden on public funds.

The Court of Appeal has provided an opportunity to pause and reflect - to the benefit of the taxpayer as well as the refugee.

RICHARD DUNSTAN
Refugee Office
Amnesty International
London EC1

Bizarre system of colonial rule

Sir: Dr Steve Kisely (letters, 24 June) cites the administrative systems of the condominium of the New Hebrides as a possible precedent for the introduction of similar arrangements in Northern Ireland.

It is true that in the New Hebrides there were parallel British and French administrative structures, but few with personal experience of the condominium (or the pandemonium, as it was otherwise known) would agree that the system "worked tolerably well".

Administration on the ground was hampered by a lack of common purpose in Paris and London, frustration and delay were the order of the day, and New Hebrideans had no say in the creation of what was a bizarre system of divisive colonial rule. It has proved an unhappy legacy for the young republic of Vanuatu.

RICHARD DORMAN
Chairman
British Friends of Vanuatu
Cheam, Surrey

Wireless fans

Sir: Miles Kilbey has really got his comics in a twist ("Cheer up! I didn't mean to drive you mad", 25 June). Arthur Askey was the little one who did not say "give him the money, Barney". It was, in tabloid terms, Wilfred Pickles who had a relationship with both Mabel and Barney.

Wireless fans everywhere must be feeling "proper poorly" (Reg Dixon of the same era).

STANLEY ROSE
Edgware

No reason for parents to worry

Sir: It is refreshing to read someone who, for once, does not advocate protecting children (Stuart Walton: "Let us not make children afraid of life", 25 June).

When we look at the facts there appears to be no reason for parents to worry. There are 12 million children in Britain. Fatal accidents are down to less than 700 a year. Ninety five per cent of parents are worried that their children might be abducted or murdered yet there were only 206 abductions in 1992, almost all of which were by estranged parents.

It is hard to keep fears for our children under control when we are frequently bombarded with health and safety campaigns to make us aware of the seemingly innumerable threats facing children. Most of these campaigns are unnecessary and only serve to heighten parents' fears, creating an unhealthy climate for children and parents alike.

WENDY EARLE
KATE MOORCOCK
Families Need Freedom
London N6

Sir: I applaud Stuart Walton. Children grow up, acquire autonomy, and make their own decisions about what is safe and what is hazardous. If we shelter them from making decisions about risk in childhood, they lack this learning experience and are less able to see consequences. When children play they often fall over. If they do not get a chance to graze a knee or break a wrist they are less well educated.

The experiences they go through in playing teach nearly all children how to make adult judgements about risk. Some don't learn, and, tragically, some parents lose a child. If all children lived in well upholstered cages, none would have accidents. I don't want to live in that zoo because I was brought up in the real, hard, world.

LAURIE VAN SOMEREN
Cambridge

Tory fallacy

Sir: The fact that Tristan Garel-Jones (26 June) uses "Middle England" even tongue in cheek, as "an all-embracing term to include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - anywhere outside SW1" explains the fallacy at the root of Tory resistance to constitutional reform.

This fallacy is that Britain is a homogeneous country with only one type of person - Middle Englanders - living in it and that we can afford a constitutional set-up which assumes uniformity. If this were ever true, it is certainly not so now. We need modernised arrangements which explicitly allow for diversity and pluralism, through decentralisation, a Bill of Rights and voting reform.

There is a better chance of containing, and creatively harnessing, strains and conflicts if the system frankly acknowledges divergences rather than imposes an artificial unity, and provides mechanisms to broker disputes and distribute and share power. A centralised first-past-the-post power monopoly which refuses to cater for differences will keep the lid on the cauldron - for a while - but at a cost to harmony, opportunity and real unity.

"Unity in diversity" is a more fruitful basis on which to enter the 21st century than the pretence of "Middle England, the all-embracing term".

SARAH LUDFORD
London N1

interview

The delivery man

Donald Macintyre and
Diane Coyle meet
Kenneth Clarke

There's a hint of cheerful exasperation in Kenneth Clarke's voice as he challenges one of the dominant conventional wisdoms of British politics: that his party has swung so far to the right that he is now the only one-nation, left-wing Tory remaining in the Cabinet. It's an analysis, he clearly believes, that depends on a fundamental misunderstanding of the flimsiness of the new right's rhetoric, on the one hand, and of his own personality and career on the other. This is Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, a true Conservative, we are meeting today.

It doesn't mean, of course, that Clarke, proud as ever to say that he has been "as constant as the Northern star", has changed his politics: quite the opposite. Rather that while some of the new young right have been talking a good game on public spending, for example, it's Clarke who has been delivering.

What's more, wasn't he vigorous in reforming the NHS and the education sector? Didn't he battle for reforms of the police, and wasn't he working hand in glove with Peter Lilley to reform social security?

"I find the view rather comic that people like me, with a track record of right-wing economics and pretty radical social reform and Europeanism based on subsidiarity, free trade and all the rest of it, are regarded as left wing." By contrast, he says challengingly: "The so-called new right is rather more noise than substance."

Some Tories have wishfully suggested that the public sector should be confined to 35 per cent, or even less, of GDP. It's absurd to depict him as a softie on public spending, he says. "All I can say is this government has worked hard to get to 42 per cent, and approaching 40 per cent has required a tougher approach to public spending than I can recall. Some of the people who are very noisy on the subject were not, as I recall, very helpful when they actually held responsibility for these things."

A cloud of cigar smoke hovers a few feet above him in his office in the Treasury. He is, by his own account, feeling a little fractious after two solid hours ploughing through a large backlog of constituency correspondence, which he has always insisted on answering personally throughout his ministerial career. But he warms to

the question of whether, having inherited a post-Black Wednesday recovery, he has had more luck than judgement as Chancellor. His favourite football story, he says, is the one about the manager accused of having lucky players. "It's funny how the lucky players are the ones who trained hard and took it seriously." The implication is that he has spent the past three years bringing the economy to peak pre-election fitness, and it has involved a lot of hard work.

Clarke does not want an autumn election. He discloses for the first time that when John Major appointed him in 1992, he told him that he would be Chancellor until at least the next election. "Therefore, I was quite interested in what conditions would be like in late 1996 and early 1997."

In the same breath that he insists Tony Blair has every reason to be "alarmed" by the way that the fundamentals of steady low interest rates, low inflation and higher personal disposable income will play for the Tories, he gives 12 months as the time scale over which he believes the opinion polls could move "very substantially".

Given that the Chancellor has gone out of his way to argue that the public will see through a pre-election bribe, does history really vindicate his view that a fiscally orthodox budget can be a vote-winner?

Didn't Maudling's last giveaway budget nearly win the Tories the 1964 election? And didn't Roy Jenkins' austere budget lose the 1970 election for Labour? Not at all, says Clarke. In 1964, the Tories were defeated by the high mortgage interest rates and inflation caused by Maudling's dash for growth. Jenkins, by contrast, "damned nearly won the election in 1970. What should have been a walkover for the Conservatives in 1970 was a damn close-run thing."

It sounds almost as if he is saying regretfully that Labour unfairly lost the 1970 election. Laughing, he says no, of course not. How could he think that about an election that brought him into Parliament?

Clarke points out that in any case the financial markets would take apart a government that was behaving irresponsibly. But surely he believes – as his Cabinet colleagues do – that the markets will allow for some fiscal irresponsibility because they want a Tory election victory? Well up to a point, the



Peak fitness: Kenneth Clarke has worked hard to get the economy ready for an election

Photograph: David Rose

Chancellor admits – "but I am not going to be irresponsible", he adds quickly.

As with tax cuts, so with interest rates. Some commentators have already concluded that Mr Clarke cares as much about growth as inflation. He denies it: "I do not set monetary policy to jack up the growth rate." If he can use interest rates to give a bit of help on that front he will, but the inflation target remains dominant.

Clarke's own view is that he is pretty right wing on economic policy, that he is an orthodox chancellor. This goes to the heart of his political value system. He doesn't say so, but he is reclaiming the term right wing from those neo-Thatcherite backbenchers who want

seemingly unlimited cuts in taxes and interest rates, and he uses the term in the older Tory, almost Peter Thorneycroft sense of fiscal and monetary responsibility. "I use the language of market economics which was politically impolitic in the Seventies when I was just starting."

It is, nevertheless, an orthodoxy that will be put to the test. The Bank's Governor, Eddie George, having opposed the last 0.25 percentage point cut, will advise an increase in interest rates if he thinks the latest economic figures are starting to hint at higher inflation some way in the future. Mr Clarke lives more for the moment. He says: "What I do not do is try to work out at what stage that situation will occur. And it will occur sooner or later in the economic cycle. But you can't guess too far out."

He claims success as his vindication: "Over the past 30 years ... it is astonishing that recent movements of interest rates have been in such a narrow band. That is a very successful monetary policy."

The Chancellor is, self-confessedly, "boastful" – without being complacent, he is careful to add – about government spending and taxation policies. At a time when the City is homing in on the near-impossibility of meeting this year's £22.5bn

target for government borrowing set last Budget, this is characteristically fighting talk.

The Clarke defence is that the Treasury's forecast for tax revenues was as good as anybody's, but there has been a shortfall. On the spending front, he has delivered better than any Chancellor in the past 30 years. "It is a long time since a government hit its spending targets on the button for three

The so-called new right is rather more noise than substance

years in a row," he says. He points out, with characteristic bluntness, that his predecessors found it easier to fudge in the days when inflation was high, and so much more of the economy was in the public sector. By contrast, he says, he is operating in a liberal, privatised economy with low inflation – a climate in which such fudging is impossible.

He insists of his promise to eliminate borrowing in the medium term: "I propose to make the medium term a reality." And he threatens – as ever – a tough public spending

round. But there are two essential pieces of the public finance arithmetic that could upset his calculations.

First, the private finance initiative, now the only significant source of funds for investment in infrastructure projects such as roads and hospitals, has ground to a halt this year. "I am quite determined that the PFI will not stall. People's impatience is understandable, but they will see a strong flow of projects. This year I do need to prove the sceptics wrong," he says.

The other question-mark hangs over future privatisation revenues. Some ministers are now pushing for the sale of Channel 4 – a nice choice, as most people do not even realise it is in the public sector. The Chancellor refuses to be drawn on whether it will, or should, go ahead. However, he stresses that it should not be allowed to become "just some routine channel showing cartoons and chat shows". In his view, Channel 4's role in raising the standards for commercial TV, and its public service remit, must be preserved.

To win, the party has to drive home the message that new Labour either has no answers (on corporate taxation, higher rates of direct tax or inflation targets, for example) or that the ones they do are not so much

new Labour as "old-fashioned social democrat". He adds: "They threaten our labour market with social legislation that the average German businessman would be delighted to get rid of."

But his party also has to end its own divisions over Europe. Ridiculing suggestions in the "Eurosceptic press" that he himself is a federalist, he says that to unite behind a referendum

Clarke wants an election next May when the polls will move their way

dum promise on EMU and the IGC White Paper is the obvious and only sensible thing to do with European policy.

Loyally, he says that the policy of non-co-operation actually succeeded in its objective of securing a programme for ending the beef ban but, equally clearly, he doesn't want to see it lightly repeated. "It would be positively counter-productive if you started using it too frequently and too casually on every issue."

Back to the theme of the day, Clarke bats away the leadership question by remarking ruefully

of his own period as the man who could become prime minister at any moment that "writings and write-downs" of people fluctuate like economic forecasts and shouldn't be taken too seriously. He adds that it is probably better to be thought of as the next leader but one, although he may be "getting a bit old for that".

That's all he has to say about the future leadership. But he remains bullishly certain that he has nothing to be ashamed of in his Tory credentials. "I was a Thatcher minister promoted by Margaret step by step – a bit slowly at first but rapidly at the end – throughout her entire period of office. So, for some of the younger guys, who fancy themselves in the House of Commons, to describe me as left wing in the name of what they imagine are right-wing Conservative policies is rather odd."

"I agree with Margaret Thatcher. I don't believe that the party has lurched to the right. It seems to me that most of the people I regard as being on the extreme right spend their time complaining that it hasn't." As Clarke himself observes, he does not slip right-wing rhetoric into his speeches. He is happy to admit to being a "little less diplomatic" than some of his colleagues, and he stands by his own judgement.

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Game, (TV) set and match

What is the best way to watch Wimbledon?

In front of a TV set.
What – not by going to Wimbledon and seeing it in person?

My dear – have you been to Wimbledon?

Yes, I think so.

How did you get there?

Well, I got a Circle Line train to Earl's Court, then I changed to a District Line train, which unfortunately turned out to be the Richmond train, so I went back to Earl's Court...

Exactly.

But lots of people do go to Wimbledon to watch the tennis, don't they?

Oh yes. But that's only so they can say they have been to Wimbledon. And to make the people with debentures and inherited tickets feel good. If nobody at all had to queue to get in, the people who already had tickets in their pockets wouldn't feel good about sweeping in.

As a matter of interest, who does go to Wimbledon?

Do you want a statistical breakdown?

Yes.

OK, here we go. Ten per

cent of people have queued to get in and paid out of their own pocket, 21 per cent have inherited their tickets from their ancestor, the Duke of Debuture, 19 per cent have got theirs from someone who knows somebody (and paid twice the going rate), 23 per cent are mothers, fathers, coaches and sweethearts of people on court, 20 per cent are corporate guests who never get to see any tennis at all and 7 per cent are people who queued for three hours at a West End box office to get tickets for Evita but got Wimbledon tickets instead.

Gosh – is Evita still running?

No. That's why they got Wimbledon tickets instead.

So the best way to watch Wimbledon is in front of a TV?

Right. You get the best view, the best tennis and the best expertise. Best of all, at home you can go to the loo whenever you want to and not have to queue, unless you live very close to the Wimbledon All-England Tennis Courts and people keep knocking on your door wanting to go to the loo.



Miles Kingston

What is the second-best way of watching Wimbledon?

With a TV in the next room.

I'm sorry – I don't think I quite...

Well, the advantage of having Wimbledon on in another room is that it gives you a high-lights-only service. After a while, sitting in front of a TV, you find you don't want to watch every stroke, just the big points, so what you do is go back to the kitchen or study or wherever you're working, and leave the telly on with the sound turned up quite loud, so that you can hear the crowd roar whenever something exciting happens. Then you rush through for the replay. Nothing good is ever left unre-

played. Or anything bad, come to that.

Hmmm ... But what happens if I do want to sit down and watch a particular Wimbledon match on TV at home?

You are kidding yourself. Nobody ever watches the match they switched on to watch. Either it is on another court, and you can hear the crowd in the background, or it is already over. No, when you switch on you are almost certain to watch a match between two people you have never heard of before, let us say the little-fancied Swiss player Gallet, and an Australian called Roger.

Roger & Gallet. Made-up names, huh?

Well, not in the case of the soap. But certainly in the case of tennis.

So what happens if I switch on and find myself watching Roger v Gallet? Obviously I don't care who wins ...

Ah, but that's where you're wrong! As soon as you switch on to a tennis match between two people you have never seen before, you automatically prefer one to the other.

It may be because one reminds you of a favourite uncle or because the other one has an annoying habit of blowing on his hands or spitting. It may be because you feel sorry for the one you like, or you fancy him – whatever it is, we all start backing one player against the other. And the weird thing is that as soon as you have started backing him, he starts losing. Nobody knows why this is, but it always happens. As soon as you express a preference for handsome dashing Roger or dark taciturn Gallet, he starts losing his grip. The commentator says, "something has gone out of his game for the moment", or "the confidence he showed in winning the last set has drained away. I don't know why". Well, YOU know why. It's because you have just started hoping he would win.

What should I do?

Switch off.

Just ... switch off?

That's it.

Till the match is over?

Yes. No. Until Wimbledon is over.

the commentators

2,804 men, 312 women: that's progress, old boy

The report on the judicial appointments system is worthless justification, argues Patricia Wynn Davies

Two thousand eight hundred and four men. Three hundred and twelve women. That is the balance of the sexes among judges in England and Wales. So the judicial establishment had better make a few more minor adjustments to their secretive, subjective and suspect "old boys' network" system of selection. Otherwise the outside world might think it biased.

That low-key warning is the upshot of months of painstaking inquiry by the Commons Home Affairs Select Committee which, subject to some suggested tweaking here and there, has given a resounding vote of confidence in the Lord Chancellor's department practice of basing appointments on secret "soundings" or "consultations" among existing judges and senior lawyers.

At best the system means that clever and suitable women, solicitors, people from non-white racial groups, those with "paperwork" rather than advoca-

cacy practices and anyone else not quite fitting the mould will continue to trickle on to the bench in markedly small numbers and, for the most part, probably remain on the lower rungs of the judicial ladder.

There is only one female Court of Appeal judge and there are only seven women on the High Court bench.

The report of the Tory-dominated committee—one of the few recent examples of a group of Conservatives appearing wholeheartedly to support the Lord Chancellor—is predictable, pathetic and patronising and a barely concealed attempt to perpetuate the status quo—especially in relation to high-ranking senior posts.

Let me make it clear. The Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, stands out from all previous holders of the office. He has genuine commitment to making appointments irrespective of race, sex, sexual orientation or political affiliation—and there are some

noteworthy appointments to prove it.

But it is method, not motive, that is in issue. Judicial statistics still show, after years of debate—and some grudgingly conceded improvements in the procedure—the male of the judicial species constantly reproducing itself.

It has long been argued that an independent Judicial Appointments Commission, staffed with lay people as well as representatives from both sides of the legal profession and with no single vested interest to protect, would represent a much more objective method of recruitment to what is, after all, one of our most vital public services. Much more objective, that is, than the second-hand, even third-hand opinions that are often proffered under the current soundings system.

But, says the report, the value of the euphemistically named "consultations network" might be diminished by a commission. Well, perish the thought.

It is hard to believe that commerce, industry or the civil service would tolerate such an anecdotal approach which is so incapable of objective monitoring and which, for all we know, might well perpetuate numerous injustices and unfairnesses against men.

But as bad, perhaps worse, is the report's insidious special pleading for the uppermost ranks of the judiciary.

One of the few tangible recommendations is the one that says that job descriptions and selection criteria for all senior judicial offices should be drawn up without delay. But "practical" difficulties prevented using advertisements, competition and interviews to fill the invitation-only vacancies on the High Court bench and above.

The message is tolerably clear: persistent criticism has slipped away at the old system to the extent that normally accepted practices such as advertising, which can widen the field of possible con-

tenders, are now used in conjunction with the "consultations" system for the lower-ranking judicial jobs, with applications handled by Lord Chancellor's Department civil servants. There can be no such intrusion on the exclusive and secret right of the senior judiciary to keep control of the appointments system.

The committee, moreover, avoided a crucial question by not extending the scope of its inquiry to the appointment of QCs—even though it accepted that appointment as a QC or "silk" is the principal route to high judicial office—again relying on "consultations".

The omission, while jolly convenient for the committee, is a further, important reason why their report is worthless. Many people think the QC system is pretty flawed because awards of silk do not reflect increasing numbers of suitably qualified women of relevant experience at the bar. In 1995, women accounted for 16 per

cent of the pool of suitable candidates for silk, 8.5 per cent of applicants and 5.8 per cent of all QCs appointed that year. The rate of appointment was only 0.8 per cent more than in 1991 when women formed 11 per cent of the pool and accounted for 6 per cent of applicants. That suggests strongly that in a system still stacked against them, women are waiting to apply until they are more sure of success.

Astonishingly, the committee suggests there is now less cause for women to "feel difficult" in applying for judicial appointment. At the same time they give unquestioning backing to precisely the kind of subjective and potentially discriminatory "word of mouth" recruitment practice that judges have condemned when cases of sex or race discrimination have been brought before them. Why should the judicial establishment apply such dramatically different standards to itself?

Ménage à trois that will not lie down

A DISGRACEFUL AFFAIR
Bianca Lamblin, trans. Julie Plovnick
Northeastern University Press, \$24.95

This book would not have been written had the author been true to her own belief that "intimate relationships should be kept personal." Nor was there a need for it.

Bianca Lamblin wishes to have it known that in seducing her, allowing her to believe that they both loved her and subsequently abandoning her, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir behaved abominably. So much is already abundantly clear to anyone who has read their correspondence.

After spending a night with Bianca Bienefeld (as she was then called) de Beauvoir wrote to Sartre: "I felt quite sickened by passion... like *foie gras* (de Beauvoir found all offal disgusting) and poor quality into the bargain." To the reader, half a century on, it is the writer's betrayal of trust that is sickening.

Bienefeld was a 16-year-old schoolgirl when her teacher, de Beauvoir, took her up. They became lovers, Bienefeld having been made to understand that de Beauvoir's "essential" relationship was not with her but with Sartre. The next year she met the great man himself (de Beauvoir kept her life rigidly compartmentalised).

Sartre couldn't exactly be said to have seduced her. Her account of their first sex is the freshest and sharpest passage of this book. On taking her to his hotel room he remarked that he had had another girl's virginity there only the previous day. "I'll never understand why I didn't react to such boorishness" — quite. He then stripped briskly, washed his feet in the hand-basin and delivered a lecture on anatomy, while Bienefeld, 17 to his 33, undressed blushing behind a curtain.

For reasons this account does little to illuminate but which are perhaps easily enough imagined (he was, after all, an acknowledged genius) she fell in love, thus completing a triangle within which (poor fool) she felt doubly beloved and uniquely secure. A year later she suffered a nervous breakdown, having been jilted by both of her lovers/mentors/surrogate parents. Fifty years on she had another one, when de Beauvoir's letters were posthumously published, and she discovered what the pair had really thought of her.

"You can't conceive how bored I am by these outpourings of affection on the part of

Bienefeld," wrote de Beauvoir to Sartre after what the poor girl probably thought was a rapturous evening. After a quarrel that had been successfully defused: "We just need to take a bit of trouble and that little person will succeed in being happy without bothering us too much."

The father and mother of Existentialism borrowed money from their teenage mistress, about which she does not complain. What does strike her as unforgivable is their apparent indifference not only to the pain they caused her, but also to the danger she was in as a Jew.

It was 1940. Bianca's grandfather and aunt were shortly to be deported to Auschwitz, yet de Beauvoir could write to Sartre: "She's prophesying doom like a Cassandra (what's new?) and hesitating between the concentration camp and suicide, with a preference for suicide." The flippancy is not only inexcusably callous. It is also stupid.

This book is not all about de Beauvoir and Sartre, but it mostly is, as it appears, its author's life has been. She married, had two daughters and a career as a teacher but, the way she tells it here anyway, it was only after de Beauvoir's death that she felt free of her. In the 50s she was a committed and energetic campaigner against the Algerian War but even this was important to her chiefly because "Simone de Beauvoir and I had finally found common political ground."

Lamblin has done herself few favours in publishing this book. It is not well written, nor well translated, and it can only serve to attract more prurient attention her way. It will be welcomed, though, by literary gossip and future biographers. For the rest of us it contains one strikingly farcical vignette. Lamblin, concerned that one or other of her illustrious ex-lovers might put her in a novel, asked them to meet her on a bench in the Jardin du Luxembourg. She was heavily pregnant at the time, a condition both Sartre and de Beauvoir found absolutely nauseating. "It was as if I were a slug or some other disgusting animal. They gazed nervously straight ahead." It's a mercy for Lamblin that at least they were both present, and so neither put their revulsion into writing. Such a letter might well have constituted yet another threat to her mental stability.

LUCY HUGHES HALLET

Yes, I am an Englishman

For the first time in a long time, people are willing to stand up and say it. And they should

Just two months ago, on 23 April, St George's Day, England did not celebrate. Few, if any, red crosses were seen and no parades blocked our city streets. The non-event was noted. Richard Littlejohn in the *Daily Mail* said it was a disgrace. The Irish in New York with their St Patrick's Day parade, the Scots have their bravehearts and the Welsh sing. Why do only the English feel obliged to deny their nationhood?

Two months later the flag-makers cannot produce enough red crosses. The tabloids are awash with a fever of specifically English patriotism. The

image of us standing alone in 1940 is an image of Spitfires dogfighting over the wastes of the Kentish Weald, not of a patchwork of Celtic and Saxon tribes confronting the enemy. Notice how the excesses of the tabloids in their build-up to last night's match effectively claimed World War II as an English rather than a British victory.

But the English have suffered because, since that war, they have been obliged to carry the entire burden of imperial guilt. The English are, stereotypically, arrogant and superior. Hollywood, ever eager to produce *Braveheart* to show that it was the snobbish, effete, brutal English who oppressed the Scots. And the American sympathy for the Irish cause has always been based on the underlying belief that the English were the conquering imperialists who created the problem in the first place.

Globally the same image persists. The empire is long gone, but we, the English, are still the snooty conquerors and the rest of the world is still the underdog. So, in the name of entertainment, it becomes perfectly acceptable to evoke medieval conflicts to express anti-Englishness. But, in the name of sport, the English themselves are not allowed to evoke an almost contemporary war — as the *Daily Mirror* did this week — to express a desire to win a simple game. Of course, neither attitude is attractive, but, on the whole, the latter is at least coherent.

The truth about this chain of guilt that has been hung around the English neck is that we are actually being used as the scapegoats for the entire liberal West. The West has won but it feels bad about it. We despoil the environment and destroy local cultures. Industrial modernity makes us rich but anxious.

And imperialism was, above all, an expression of the triumphant industrial modernity of



the English. We invented science, technology and industry and, for most of two centuries, it made us all powerful. Over the last 50 years English power has declined, but our idea of modernity has gone on to make the West all-powerful. Our system of production may have once created a now-hated empire, but it also made America and defeated fascism and communism.

A collective Western guilt,

however, is too big to make popular sense. So the English are cast into the global wilderness to atone. Think how hard it now is to be patriotically English. Professional Scots, Welsh, Irish, French and Americans are everywhere, flaunting their idiosyncrasies, but the English cower, occasionally making fun of themselves.

What may be happening now is that the English have

had enough of this. The Scots want independence, the Irish still fight us and the Welsh want to be Welsh. Perhaps the English are deciding it is time to be English. Euro 96 has, among other things, produced a popular revision against bland globalism — the dull, Eurotrash anthem by Simply Red, commissioned as the official theme, has been all but wiped out by Baddiel and

Skinner's ironic, mournful, but perennially hopeful dirge. "Football's coming home," we all sing and home is England.

This could, of course, be an awful development. English patriotism has a bad recent history. Embraced by hooligans and Europhobes alike, it has been an excuse for the worst kind of petty nationalism. Michael Portillo, with his ghastly SAS speech at last year's Tory conference, may not wish to be pigeon-holed with the average skinhead wrecker, but, frankly, he is not many pigeon-holes away.

And the whining of the Tory Eurosceptics is no more sensitive or realistic or frequently no less disgusting than that of the National Front. These are the attitudes of a paranoid culture of losers.

Maybe the problem is that we have grown so accustomed to being losers — either economically or because of our global role as scapegoats for the West — that the best we can do is whine and sulk. And, if that is the case, then this new English patriotism with its flags and songs is a good thing. For it signals that we, as a place, still want to win and that desire, whether or not it is fully expressed this time round, will wake us from our long sleep of defeat.

For you have to be something to understand anything. There are no global identities. The mythologies and iconographies of patriotism are, when not perverted by hatred or bitter irony, good, consoling and probably essential. They are ways of saying that people like to be at home, to belong. They are also expressions of confidence. Bitter losers wrap themselves in the flag, confident winners wave it.

I like being English, in spite of the fantasies of the mad Eurosqueamish liberals, because that is what I am. And next 23 April, you never know, I might just overcome my native irony and do something.

Selling up is the spur to another fortune

Tycoons are driven to repeat their success, says Will Bennett

When Alan Sugar pockets an estimated £80m from the planned sale of his company Amstrad, he will not take it easy by a swimming pool, head for the golf course or potter gently around the salerooms collecting 19th-century porcelain. The irascible self-made millionaire, who spent 28 years building up the consumer electronics group, will direct his formidable energies towards developing the business potential of Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, which he bought five years ago.

It would also surprise nobody if he founded another company similar to Amstrad. Entrepreneurs are not only incapable of relaxing with their millions: they are driven to repeat their success stories time and time again.

Michael Cannon has a 1,200 acre estate in Devon, a wonderful manor house in Dorset and enjoys shooting and living the life of a country gentleman. It is all very far removed from the relatively humble beginnings of a nan who left school at 15. In 1993, he made £26m from selling the Devenish pub chain he had built up over 19 years; and with the money in the bank and his future assured, he and his wife booked a year-long cruise around the world on a luxury liner.

To nobody's surprise he cancelled the cruise at the last moment because the chance of buying another chain of pubs came up. Last week Mr Cannon, 57, made another £70m from selling that business, The Magic Pub Company, to the brewers Greene King. Those who know him say that even now he is in no mood to retire to the country. Philip Snook, the outgoing managing director of The Magic Pub Company, who himself stands to make £5m from the sale, says: "Michael is a very strong-minded individual and I think that the prospect of not working horrifies him. He is a workaholic."

Professor Cary Cooper, of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, believes that such entrepreneurs are driven by the need to control their lives and to prove to themselves or others that they can succeed repeatedly. "The driving force is usually something negative that happened to them early in their life and that has made them want to control their world in a way in which they did not have control when they were young."

Professor Cooper carried out a survey of successful entrepreneurs and discovered that only 5 per cent of

them had both their parents present throughout their entire childhood. The rest lost at least one parent through death or came from broken marriages or were separated for some other reason, such as being sent away to school. Seventy-four per cent of those questioned identified "some significant shaping event in their

The driving force is usually something negative in childhood

childhood" that gave them the toughness and drive to succeed in business. In some cases, it was bullying or ridicule from fellow school pupils; in others, the scornful dismissiveness of a parent or teacher.

Professor Cooper says: "When they sell their businesses, they will start another company. It is not the money, they could have £10m, £20m, it does not matter. Money only tells them that they are successful and they need to prove themselves to somebody all over again."

Sir Mark Weinberg, who has twice

quit major insurance companies that he founded, but is still in the same business, fits Professor Cooper's theory perfectly. His father died when he was two and he was sent away to a boarding school which he loathed. In the Sixties, with just £70,000, he set up Abbey Life, where he pioneered unit-linked assurance plans and gained a reputation as an innovator and a tough salesman. He left the company, which by then was worth £31m, when the American giant FTT took it over 10 years later.

"I feel I would not be able to adjust to working as an executive for a really large international corporation, it is just not my style," he said at the time. He no longer had control of the business which he had built up from scratch. He was soon back, building up Hambro Life, now known as Allied Dunbar, but left 10 years ago after it was taken over by another company of which he was also a director.

Sir Mark, now 64, could have opted for the easy life but, as his right hand man Mike Wilson puts it: "He didn't want to retire with the graph going down." He soon set up what one observer nicknamed Mark III, a new life assurance company called J.

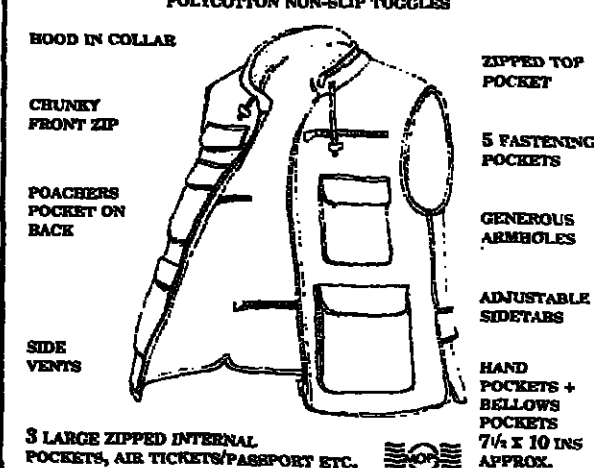
Rothschild Assurance, of which he is still chairman.

Lord Harris of Peckham started in the carpet business by taking over his family's three shops, after his father died when he was 15. He expanded and built up the Harris Queensway carpet empire, which he sold for £70m in 1988. After the sale, he decided to spend some time sailing his yacht around the Mediterranean. He could have kept on sailing for ever, but he was inexorably drawn back to the same business. Within months, he opened a carpet shop in London and eight years later his Carpetright chain has more than 200 outlets and 14 per cent of the British market.

Lord Harris, 53, who is one of the Conservative Party's most important financial backers, has always denied that he is driven by a desire to make Carpetright bigger than Queensway, which crashed shortly after he sold out. But one former business associate said yesterday: "He may not even acknowledge to himself but he is proving himself all over again."

It is ironic that while millions of people dream of taking early retirement if they win the National Lottery, some of those who could afford never to work again are incapable of opting for the easy life.

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CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Cable firms turn to Oftel over BT 'dirty tricks' campaign

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Angry UK cable operators have accused BT of running a "dirty tricks" campaign to win back telephone customers, and have called on Oftel, the telecoms regulator, to intervene.

In the most serious allegations ever made against the dominant operator, cable companies charge that BT market-

ing staff have rung hundreds of ex-directory cable customers in Tescos, Yorkshire, Birmingham and London, addressing them by name, and asking them to consider switching back to BT. If true, the campaign would contravene BT's own guidelines, its licence conditions, and laws governing data protection and privacy.

Sources at leading cable companies also accused BT of giving out incorrect information about rivals, over the telephone and in printed material. Hundreds of written statements from disgruntled cable customers have been forwarded to Oftel.

A spokesman for Oftel said yesterday that "we have received complaints, and have asked BT to initiate a high-level probe, the results of which we expect imminently. BT is in no

doubt about how seriously we take these charges."

A BT spokesman said: "We take the charges seriously. But I must stress that so far, our investigations show we have done nothing wrong. We will go back to the [Cable Communications Association] with a full report of our review early next week."

Graham MacPhee, marketing director at Comcast, a leading operator, said the information so far gathered by the operators "looks quite damaging, and if it is true, it is appalling behaviour by BT".

Bob Frost, director of the CCA, this week called Peter Bonfield, head of BT, directly about the issue. "We are of course very concerned," Mr Frost said, "and if the matters prove to be substantiated, our members will have to seriously consider their position."

BT has a record of all ex-directory numbers in the UK, principally to cover emergency 999 calls. It is enjoined from using the numbers for marketing purposes under its licence with Oftel. BT has been losing customers to cable operators at the rate of at least 50,000 a month, and the competition has been particularly fierce in recent weeks, following price cuts by large cable companies.

Costain suspended as shares plunge in frantic dealing

PATRICK TOOHER

Dealings in shares in the troubled Costain construction company were suspended yesterday ahead of a major refinancing package, which is likely to be announced next week and be accompanied by details of its long-awaited sale of its US mining businesses.

The news emerged after Costain's shares lost almost half their value in a frantic few minutes in early morning trading, slumping 31p to 39p before being suspended at the company's request.

In a statement to the Stock Exchange, Costain admitted it would be unable to meet Friday's deadline for the publication of its 1995 results. A further announcement about significant corporate developments would be made shortly, Costain added.

Costain is in advanced talks with a potential buyer for its US mining unit, according to sources close to the building company. Its 1995 results, which are expected to show a loss of about £40m, are unlikely to be published until the mining sale is completed because a write-down is likely against group earnings.

could disappoint the market", said one analyst.

Costain is also understood to be lining up at least one outside investor linked to its core building and civil engineering interests who would take a sizeable equity stake in the group. The move is designed to stiffen Costain's capital base and reduce an £80m debt burden, which equates to about 90 per cent of shareholders' funds.

"We have needed to strengthen the balance sheet for some time," a source close to the company said last night.

"We have always sought to keep Costain's identity and now we want to reinforce it with new money," Costain has sold UK housing and commercial property interests as well as a large part of its coal mining business to reduce debts. But analysts say the group's prospects hinge on a successful disposal of its remaining US coal businesses.

The need for a fresh capital injection was underlined yesterday when IBCA, the European credit rating agency, placed Costain's rating under review with negative implications. "Following two profit warnings since the start of 1996, the equity base of the group is clearly under pressure and relies heavily on the support afforded by the accounting treatment of its pension fund prepayment" the agency said.

IBCA said Costain had been successful in winning new contracts recently and this should be beneficial to its cash position, as trade creditors expand, if not its profits.

"However, it would make the Government's choice of Costain as the contractor for the high-profile Newbury by-pass contract seem unwise were Costain's financial predicament to worsen."

Costain courted controversy earlier this month when it was awarded the £73.8m Newbury by-pass contract. Within hours of the news being announced in Parliament some 25 anti-roads protesters blockaded Costain's offices in nearby Maidenhead.

A fortnight earlier Alan Lovell, Costain's chief executive, had endured demonstrators with banners on the lawn of his home in Winchester after it emerged Costain was favourite to clinch the contract.

Costain is also one of several contractors embroiled in a protracted legal battle with Eurotunnel over work done on Channel Tunnel. Shares in Costain have been one of the worst stock market investments in the past decade. At its peak in 1987 Costain enjoyed a stock market value of almost £1.7bn; at yesterday's suspension price the company was worth just £20.2m.

Sporting life: Grand National record tumbles in feast for City as well as bookies



Putting their shirts on it: Traders at Sporting Index dress appropriately to take their spread bets on last night's match Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Work was the last thing on most people's minds at 7.30 last night but in the betting business it was far and away the busiest evening yet in a frenetic summer of sport.

Euro 96 nets £80m as punters spread wings

Bookmaking giant Ladbrokes said last night that punters had wagered more than £80m on Euro 96 so far, making it Britain's biggest betting event.

Spread-betting has become one of the boom leisure activities of the 1990s with Sporting Index alone taking 15,000 bets a week, 10 times the level of the whole industry just four years ago.

Born on the trading floors of the City, where rivals IG Index and City Index still do much of their business, Sporting Index has taken the concept to other gamblers and believes fewer than a quarter of its customers now work in the Square Mile.

William Hill has a spread-betting operation and Ladbrokes plans to launch in November, a move welcomed by Sporting Index's Lindsay McNeill, who is happy for the betting giants to take on the expense of educating non-City punters in the intricacies of betting on a spread.

For anyone who has bought or sold a share, the idea is simple enough. For any given event, Sporting Index's traders will offer a buy and sell price which means that unlike with a fixed-odds bet at a bookie, a punter can gamble on an outcome being

Sweetbaum forced to resign as Wickes chief

PATRICK TOOHER

Henry Sweetbaum last night bowed to intense pressure from institutional shareholders by resigning as the £1m-a-year chairman and chief executive of Wickes, Britain's third biggest DIY retailer.



Henry Sweetbaum: steps down from £1m-a-year job

Mr Sweetbaum has been replaced as non-executive chairman by Michael von Brentano, while another non-executive board member, Robert Burrow, becomes deputy chairman. Wickes plans to appoint a full-time chief executive in due course.

Stuart Stradling, who only became finance director a year ago, will also quit the Wickes board as soon as an investigation begun yesterday by accountants Price Waterhouse and legal firm Linklaters & Paine into the circumstances leading up to the accounting errors, announced on Tuesday, has been completed.

Arthur Andersen, the auditors who signed off last year's accounts, is quantifying the likely shortfall in the 1995 figures "and earlier years", a company spokesman said.

Shares in Wickes were suspended at 69p on Tuesday following the discovery of "serious accounting problems".

The problem is thought to centre on the way the company has been accounting for supplier discounts and their contributions towards in-store promotions.

Mr Sweetbaum stepped down after a series of lengthy board meetings yesterday afternoon called to discuss the accounting inaccuracies.

His departure, while sudden, was seen as increasingly inevitable. One senior fund manager, speaking shortly before news of Mr Sweetbaum's resignation broke, said: "There's bound to be pressure for

British Biotech raises £143m as rival launch makes history

MAGNUS GRIMOND

The UK biotechnology sector passed two milestones yesterday with its biggest fund-raising and the launch of what is claimed to be the first biotech-developed product to come to market. British Biotech, leader of the UK industry, is calling on shareholders for £143m in a one-for-eight rights issue at £20.50 a share, compared with the market price of £22.75.

The announcement coincided with the announcement from rival Chiroscience that its Dextetropin pain killer and arthritis therapy had been launched last week in Spain by its partner, Menarini, Italy's largest pharmaceutical group.

The timing and size of the rights issue surprised the market. It comes less than five months after British Biotech raised £47.5m from the exercise of warrants, which was expected to cover its cash needs until 1997.

The group revealed yesterday it had net cash of £66.6m in April, but James Noble, finance director, said they had been considering ways of raising money since January. The indications they had had from big shareholders were that this should be the last fund-raising before the company became self-financing through drug sales and that it should come on the back of successful results for Marimastat, British Biotech's novel cancer treatment.

Hopes for this drug have fuelled a surge in the group's share price, which briefly touched £38 last month after encouraging phase II results were released. The new money will finance the final stage of tests before the product receives official approval.

Phase III trials for inoperable pancreatic cancer have already begun and over the next few months at least seven separate trials will be started and run in parallel to determine Marimastat's effectiveness against a range of cancers. A pilot trial in AIDS patients is also to be started.

STOCK MARKETS					
FTSE 100	Dow Jones	Nikkei	FTSE 250	FTSE 350	FTSE 400
3686.50	+16.00	+0.4	3657.10	3639.50	4.10
3685.30	-19.20	-0.4	4568.60	4015.30	3.42
1866.00	+4.50	+0.2	1945.40	1818.60	3.95
2209.06	-8.28	-0.4	2244.36	1954.06	2.94
1853.24	+3.69	+0.2	1924.17	1791.95	3.87
5683.81	-35.46	-0.6	5778.00	5032.94	2.17
22686.80	+69.63	+0.3	22686.80	19734.70	0.701
11059.92	+77.15	+0.7	11594.99	10204.87	3.341
2573.69	+0.73	+0.0	2573.69	2253.36	1.821

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	Money Market Rates	Bond Yields	
5.00	6.00	7.00	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)
5.00	6.00	7.00	3 Months	2 Year	Long Bond (%)
5.00	6.00	7.00	6 Months	3 Year	10 Year (%)
5.00	6.00	7.00	9 Months	4 Year	15 Year (%)
5.00	6.00	7.00	12 Months	5 Year	20 Year (%)

CURRENCIES					
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	Pound	Dollar	
1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425
1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425
1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425
1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425	1.5425

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A British backward trend that needs reversing

COMMENT

The 1996 DTI Scoreboard shows that we have gone nowhere since 1991. R&D as a proportion of sales is the same today as it was then and still only half the level of companies in other main developed countries.

For the last five years the Department of Trade and Industry has proudly published its annual UK R&D Scoreboard, a league table that ranks companies by what they spend on research and development. In the past the Scoreboard has shown that corporate Britain, while not exactly setting the world on fire, is at least chugging along in the right direction. It now emerges, however, that far from chugging somewhere in the lower reaches of the league, we are in fact languishing in the Endleigh League of Invention.

The 1996 Scoreboard, published today, shows that we have gone nowhere since 1991. R&D as a proportion of sales is the same today as it was then and still only half the level of companies in other main developed countries. The rise in absolute investment was the lowest last year for five years despite a purple patch for corporate profits in the last two years. And in the one area of the pitch that the UK has traditionally done well - growing its R&D investment at a faster rate than the rest of the world - the trend has gone into reverse.

Oh, dear. Not quite Accrington Stanley but time, perhaps, to start thinking about applying for re-election to the league.

The problem, of course, with scoreboards and league tables is that, fascinating though they may be, the crude statistics reveal only half the story. They may tell you the quantity of money spent on R&D but they give no insight into the quality of that R&D nor the amount spent on R as opposed to D. There

is a vast difference between invention and innovation. Nor do big R&D budgets automatically equate to commercial success.

The UK's position relative to competitor countries is further skewed by the preponderance of drug companies in the league table. The pharmaceutical sector accounts for one third of total R&D spending by UK companies, which means that just one giant deal like the Glaxo-Wellcome merger can have a huge distorting effect.

Nevertheless, there are some worrying trends. The long-term picture shows clearly that UK plc under-invests in R&D - a disparity that cannot be explained away by the cost of funds or City short-termism - while the tail of companies that pay inadequate attention to R&D is getting longer and shorter. This ultimately, can only hurt UK competitiveness. Companies wanting to do something about it should use the scoreboard to benchmark their performance against the best in their class.

Costain delivers lorry load of bad news

Costain has been a disaster story for longer than anyone would care to remember. A more spectacular case of lost shareholder value is hard to imagine. Ten years ago, this household name in construction and road building was worth around £1.7bn, or nearly as much as Railtrack. Today the company is valued at

just £20m - possibly less depending on the size of the latest lorry load of bad news now being prepared for City consumption.

So much has already been written and said about Costain's fall from grace, that it is probably wise to withhold comment until delivery takes place. One aspect of the latest chapter of woes does bear examination, however - the sudden plunge in the share price and the subsequent suspension of trading. The case for suspension of share dealings has never been a strong one. In so far as there is a justification it is to prevent the prospect of a rumour-driven and disorderly market. But too often the effect is to deprive less well-informed shareholders of the opportunity to sell at a reasonable price. Consider the last two cases of it - Costain, and the day before, Wickes. In both cases, the better informed class of shareholder was able to exit the stock before dealings were halted. It seems highly likely that some of this activity was essentially insider dealing. But most of it would have been City professionals sniffing the wind.

As for most small shareholders, however, they would not even have been aware of the share price plunge until it was too late to deal. It could be argued that share suspension protects these people, since without such a mechanism the shares would continue to trade, exposing small shareholders to the risk of selling at an unrealistically low price.

But in practice it doesn't often work this way. The news is nearly always worse than the stock market imagined. The suspension, if it

is ever lifted at all, thus acts merely as a temporary break in the southward passage of the shares. In any case, it cannot be right to deprive any shareholder of the ability to sell on the grounds that their judgement may be at fault. That is the very antithesis of what free markets are meant to be about.

Those who gain most from share suspensions tend to be market-makers, for while trading persists, they are obliged to buy. But no one should feel too sorry for them. Market-makers already have enough protections and privileges.

Biotech boosted by an act of faith

The market was asking for it, and it duly got it - an opportunistic rights issue from the head boy of the biotech sector, British Biotech. Yesterday's £143m rights issue is a chunky call on shareholders, even for a company valued at £1.4bn. It represents a substantial act of faith by the group's normally hard-nosed City investors, particularly as it represents more than the £124m that British Biotech has raised from the market since its flotation in 1992. Most of what investors have coughed up so far has already been spent, judging by the £110m deficit the group sports in its accumulated profit and loss account. Directors are confident that the new money will bridge the gap between now and the end of the century, when, hopefully, at least one of the company's

drugs will actually be earning some money.

Even so, the timing of this issue looks just a little suspect. Despite the recent fall in the share price, the call is deliberately pitched to take advantage of the warm sentiment surrounding recent news on Marimastat, British Biotech's anti-cancer wonder drug. With £66m in the bank, the company could easily have afforded to wait for something a little more concrete by way of product confirmation before tapping shareholders for the next phase of development.

Furthermore, if any of the products live up to their promise, then by waiting the company could raise the money a good deal more cheaply.

The risk for investors is exacerbated in that, with every new demand for cash, commercial risks are being piled on the already evident product risk. Spanning new labs and a substantial sales force are all very well for the likes of an industry giant like Glaxo, but for a management with no saleable product, let alone any experience of running what is becoming a sizeable company, they represent a move into uncharted waters.

And despite Chiroscience's news that it has launched what probably represents the first full biotechnology-developed product to come to market, the real blockbusters still have steep mountains to climb before they can earn real money. British Biotech will probably be allowed to get away with this time, but there are some nervous investors out there, none the less.

UK firms fall behind in R&D spending league

ROGER TRAPP

UK companies fell further behind their international competitors in research and development investment last year, according to official figures published today. Only 18 British companies appear among the top 300 international companies listed in the annual R&D Scoreboard.

For the first time since the rankings sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry's Innovation Unit was launched in 1991, UK spending in this area grew at a lower rate than the rest of the world - 4 per cent, compared with the international rate of 5 per cent. This reverses the recent trend for British companies to start to close the gap with overseas rivals.

However, the number of British-based companies in the league has increased from last year's 12. Wellcome has merged with Glaxo, to become Britain's highest-placed company in 25th position with a spend of £1.2bn, and Boots, GKN, BOC, Lucas, Siebe, BTR and British Aerospace have joined the league.

The figures were seized upon by Labour as evidence of "the parlous state of Britain's international competitiveness". Adam Ingram, shadow minister for science and technology, said: "British industry has to invest more in research and development if we are going to prosper in what is becoming an

R&D spending			
Company	Current R&D Spending (£bn)	% Change '95-'96	R&D % of sales
World-wide top 10			
General Motors (US)	5.40	19	8.0
Ford Motor (US)	4.19	25	5.9
Siemens (Germany)	3.67	9	8.2
Hitachi (Japan)	3.62	10	8.2
AT&T (US)	2.98	20	4.7
Shell (UK)	2.58	2	5.1
Motorola (US)	2.58	1	5.4
IBM (US)	2.19	1	4.1
Fujitsu (Japan)	2.02	2	5.9
Nippon (Japan)	1.99	2	4.5
UK top 10			
Glaxo-Wellcome (25)	1.200	0	15.1
Stratton (26)	635	2	9.2
Unilever (27)	595	1	1.9
British Airways (28)	545	1	11.2
Shell (29)	545	2	9.2
BP (30)	445	2	7.4
Rolls Royce (31)	278	2	2.0
Rolls Royce (32)	206	0	5.7
Rolls Royce (33)	191	0	7.1
Rolls Royce (34)	185	1	1.4

Source: UK DTI Scoreboard, 1996

increasingly competitive global economy.

This was an echo of the remarks in the scoreboard introduction by Richard Freeman, corporate chief economist at Imperial Chemical Industries, that "unless the UK companies increase their R&D investments faster than their overseas competitors, the UK will lose competitiveness over the longer term".

But he added that the Government was also partly to blame

because it had penalised the research and development base through retreating from publicly-funded science and technology. "They have created a culture of under-funding and under-investment in the very bedrock of our economy," he said.

The 1996 table produced by Edinburgh-based accounts monitor Company Reporting shows that the top 18 UK companies spent an average of 2.5 per cent of annual sales on R&D, compared with the

overall average of 4.4 per cent for the leading 300 international organisations. Over the five years, the proportion of turnover spent in this way by companies based in the UK has been less than half that of companies in other countries and the same as the 1991 level.

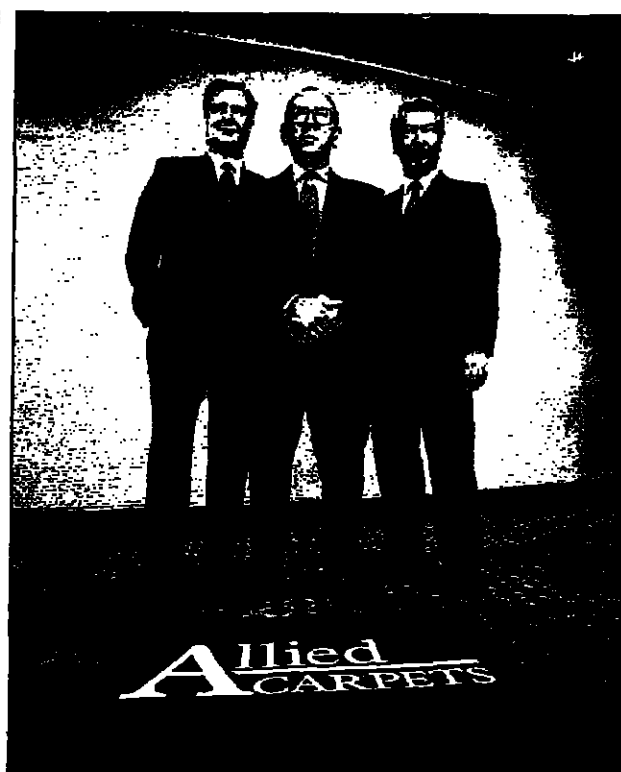
The largest national increase in R&D spending was Sweden's 21 per cent, followed by Canada, Germany and the United States. In France, investment fell 2 per cent, while in Italy it fell 8 per cent.

Mr Freeman said: "The importance of technological activity and innovation for the UK's competitiveness and capacity to create wealth cannot be overstated."

"However, increasing R&D spending does not automatically lead to commercial success. Companies need to bridge the often-overlooked gap between invention and innovation, the process of successfully exploiting the idea."

To be effective, projects needed to be part of companies' overall strategies and focused on customers' needs. And this required the close involvement of all areas of operations, he added.

In keeping with Glaxo-Wellcome's position as the highest-placed British company, the pharmaceutical sector accounted for nearly a third of total R&D spending in the UK - £2.7bn out of the total reported investment of £9.1bn.



Carpet roll-out: (from left) finance director David Pout, managing director Ray Nethercott and deputy managing director Shaun Doran of Allied Carpets, which comes to the stock market valued at more than £200m next month and will open a further 20 stores a year for the rest of the decade, to take its total to 270 Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Suspended Astra chief is sacked

JOHN WILLCOCK

Astra, the Swedish drugs company, has fired its already suspended US chief executive, Lars Bildman, following an internal investigation into allegations of sexual harassment and financial improprieties.

Astra USA, a unit of Swedish pharmaceutical giant Astra AB, said yesterday that Mr Bildman had engaged in "inappropriate behaviour" and used approximately \$2m (£1.3m) of the company's funds for his personal use.

The company has also fired George Roadman, vice-president of marketing and sales for the hospital division. Edward Aarons, director of institutional business, and Anders Loner, head of Swedish marketing operations, are also to resign. Astra said it would give them no monetary compensation.

Messrs Bildman, Roadman and Aarons were suspended earlier this year after allegations of widespread sexual harassment had surfaced, and received widespread press coverage in the US.

A spokesman for Astra said: "There is evidence that Bildman used company funds for personal expenses, including the renovations to his houses and vacations."

"Approximately \$2m was involved. We understand that state and federal authorities have opened their own investigations into these matters and we are co-operating," he added.

The US Department of Justice, the Internal Revenue Service and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue have all made inquiries to Astra about the alleged misuse of funds. Francis Carling, an attorney for Astra, said Mr Bildman has previously denied any wrongdoing.

In Stockholm, Astra's lawyer, Thomas Clauss, said that if damages had to be paid to people who allege they have been sexually harassed, the sums would not be great. "If there is the question of damages, it will not be of a significant size."

A competition open to anyone with a kind heart and a good eye.

All you have to do is take a photograph. It can be a photograph of anything you feel represents the 'Heart of Britain'.

There are nine categories, which might give you some ideas: Young Britain, Working Britain, Animal Britain, Sporting Britain, Britain on the Move, Caring Britain, Good Time Britain, Beautiful Britain, and Tomorrow's Britain.

Your photo might be one of the three hundred chosen by a panel of celebrity judges to appear in the 'Heart of Britain' book, which will be on sale in October. The winner of each category will be given a new Mju-1 compact camera, generously donated by Olympus.

There is a small entry fee, but all the proceeds of the entries and royalties from the book will go to Royal Brompton Hospital, one of the leading heart and lung hospitals in the world.

Entry forms can soon be picked up from BP garages, branches of Dixons, John Menzies and WH Smith, Dillons, Waterstone's

and other major bookshops, or by telephoning 0891 252605* (If you'd like to make a donation now you can do so at any branch of Lloyds or by post to The Heart of Britain Appeal, Royal Brompton Hospital, London SW3 6NP.)

The Heart of Britain book will be a remarkable record of the nation in the final years of the 20th Century. And your photograph and name could be there for all to see.

But the pleasure you might get will be far outweighed by the pleasure you will give.

Because you will be giving someone the chance of a better life; or simply a better chance of living.

So have a heart. Take a picture.

In support of Royal Brompton Hospital, the leading edge in heart research and treatment.

Supported by: AMV Group • Bookman Projects • Dixons • Halifax Building Society • Hilldown Holdings • Love This Records • Marks & Spencer

*Calls will last less than one minute and are charged at 39p per minute (including VAT) at other times. All profits will be donated to charity. Lines close 18th July 1996



Heart of Britain

business

New team settles in at Laporte

Nine months into the job, Laporte's new chief executive, Jim Leng, has barely had time to pause for breath. Yesterday's announcement of the £29m disposal of the chemicals company's Australasian operations was just the latest move in a radical restructuring that has seen a complete overhaul of the executive board and 10 per cent of the group put up for sale.

Mr Leng came in for something of a pasting when nine weeks into the job he outlined a dramatic restructuring and issued a profits warning but he was right not to hang around. Selling the 11 disparate businesses that made up Laporte's operations down under makes abundant sense given its pretty pathetic return on sales and capital employed.

During the second half of last year operating profit was a paltry £400,000 from sales of £35m. Little more than a 1 per cent margin. The businesses were decidedly not paying their way in terms of management time and Laporte is better off without them.

For the next few weeks anyway management is going to be fully occupied in getting its feet under the table. A new finance director starts work on Monday as do two other divisional heads. Mr Leng maintains that the operating businesses have been moving ahead nicely while the top table was reshuffled but, in reality, Laporte will welcome a bit more stability.

Britain's fourth biggest chemicals company, Laporte ought to be nicely placed with good positions in growing markets. In electronic chemicals it supplies semiconductor manufacturers with the chemicals needed to prepare silicon wafers and it makes the imaging masks on which circuitry is drawn.

With chips in more and more domestic gadgetry, demand could more than double in the next few years according to industry analysts. Laporte's other subcontracting businesses supply some pretty attractive markets. The specialty organic chemicals division supplies pharmaceutical firms with the building blocks, called intermediates, for drugs. That market is constantly changing, driven by new illnesses and treatments, and is growing fast as drug companies sub-contract more and more of their work.

The challenge for Mr Leng is to extract a better return from that trading environment and to limit the damage in Laporte's more mature, duller areas such as building and construction chemicals, glue and sealants, where demand is still sluggish. In the first five years of the 1990s earnings growth was far too patchy for a company with Laporte's opportunities.

Analysis are forecasting profits of

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

about £120m this year, before a good-will write-off on yesterday's sale, for eps of about 44p and a prospective p/e of 15. Until the earnings growth record becomes more sustained and at a higher rate, that is high enough.

Harvey Nichols looks pricey

Harvey Nichols, the upmarket Knightsbridge department store that came to the market in April, will have to work hard to live up to its fancy valuation. So far the company's brief spell as a public company has proved rewarding for only a select few investors.

Priced at 270p, the shares shot to 334p on their first day of dealings. All very nice for City institutions who had subscribed to the placing.

Not so good for ordinary members of the public who could not get their hands on the shares until trading had started. At yesterday's 337p, up 6p on the day, Joe Public's shares have gone more or less nowhere.

Whether they have the legs to travel much further depends very much on whether management can continue to

deliver the impressive results served up so far. Yesterday's figures were certainly Knightsbridge class with pre-tax profits in the year to March up from £3.9m to £9.1m.

Like-for-like sales improved by a healthy 14 per cent, driven largely by the in-store concessions where sales were up by almost 25 per cent. Margins have been maintained and the lid has been kept on costs.

The margin performance is particularly impressive, given the high level of lower-margin concession sales. These account for 43 per cent of fashion retail space. Though the margins are lower than in own bought merchandise, concessions offer a level of security for the host company as the tenants have to guarantee a minimum level of sales.

Sales from food retailing and hospitality have also increased by 19 per cent on the previous years with food margins boosted by a concentration on own brands.

Current trading is encouraging with sales in the 11th week of the year up by a thumping 20 per cent.

This year will see a full contribution from the new menswear floor which added 3,800 square feet and the Foundation restaurant and bar. The new

Leeds store will open in October and the first stand-alone restaurant at the Oxo Tower in London in September. Two other London sites have been identified for restaurants though the company added no details yesterday.

Morgan Stanley is forecasting profits of £21.2m this year which puts the shares on a premium rating of 24. Expensive.

Hogg bullish on year ahead

The jump in full-year profits from Hogg Robinson, the travel to financial services company, up 51 per cent to a record £26.3m, were nicely ahead of expectations of about £25m and the shares rose 15p rise to 364p.

That improvement capped a good year during which the shares have pulled away from the low of 145p reached in the spring of 1995. Even after their good run, however, the improvement in trading after 1995's stagnant result means the shares still have plenty of attractions.

The increase in profits from last year's £17.4m received a significant boost from the recent £58m acquisition of the Bennett Travel Group, which chipped in £7.75m in its first nine months of ownership. But there were better results also from most of its business sectors, with the exception of transport, where returns remained relatively flat at £5.64m.

Brian Perry chairman, pointed to what remain difficult trading conditions in core businesses of transport, business travel and financial services, but he struck a bullish note on prospects for the current year.

Hogg provides a business travel service for 40 of the top 100 companies, and recorded a 22 per cent rise in profits from that arm, a fifth of sales but almost twice as much in profit terms. Mr Perry sees the already significant rise in business travel in the past year increasing even more sharply.

Profits from the financial services arm jumped 37 per cent, boosted by the growth of its independent financial advice subsidiary and the continued expansion of the employee benefits business. Transport was hit by a decline in exports from Germany to Britain.

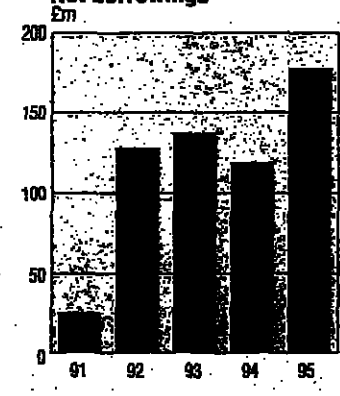
On the basis of forecasts of more than £31m in the year to March, the shares stand on a prospective price-earnings ratio of 12, which compares favourably with an estimated growth rate in the mid-teens. Good value.

LAPORTE: AT A GLANCE

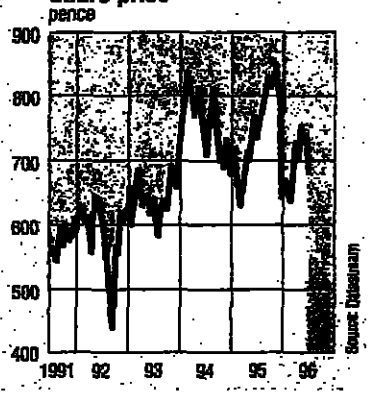
Market value: £1.30bn, share price 674p

5-year record	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Turnover (£m)	32.9	32.2	37.7	36.5	1,088
Pre-tax profits (£m)	96.4	86.6	107	124	24.5
Earnings per share (pence)	40.9	38.2	41.4	46.7	4.3
Dividends per share (pence)	18.9	19.5	20.7	22.4	23.0

Net borrowings



Share price



City dinosaurs shell out for a sad, staid rock-fest

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

The world of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll will collide on Saturday with that of JP Morgan, BZW and Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, at the Masters of Music concert in Hyde Park.

Those well-known merchant bankers Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan and Pete Townshend of The Who (pictured right) will be headlining the nine-hour festival in front of 150,000 fans, each of whom will pay £8 for the privilege. There's no hippy nonsense about free festivals here, sadly, no druged, naked bodies frolicking in the mud à la Woodstock. Far from it.

The three aforementioned investment banks are paying a minimum of £200 per ticket to take assorted guests along for some corporate hospitality. This will include lunch at the Dorchester, champagne and canapés at the "gig", and dinner at Nico's or some similar swish establishment. Not a split in sight.

We all know the Jurassic generation of rock stars have "cleaned up their act" these days, but does this rock-fest have to be quite so staid? All together now: "Hope I die before I get old..."

Sir Ian MacLaurin, chairman of Tesco, adds another feather to his cap. Not only has Tesco edged ahead of Sainsbury as Britain's biggest food retailer, but now Sir Ian's stores are also the favourite place to buy wine.

Is there anyone you have met in the media and advertising world during your career who you really hate, loathe and despise? Now's your chance to get your own back - or so it would appear. A bizarre ad in *Private Eye* this week is headed: "Spirit of Machiavelli alive and well in advertising world?" It goes on: "Serious author proposes to chronicle the most dire examples in agency/media world of back stabbing, stitching-up, brown-nosing, sexual harassment... scheming and downright malice.... If indeed any of the above still exist in the caring, sharing Nineties."

The author then provides a fax number for suggestions. But hang on. Could the ad be a trap placed by a coalition of the nastier people in advertising who want to find out who their true enemies are - and then crush them? I think we should be told.



Their generation: Merchant bankers are forking out £200 per ticket for a chance to revisit their youth with The Who

According to business magazine *Checkmate*, Tesco had a 39 per cent share of the plonk market over the last quarter, shading Sainsbury by 2 per cent. Between them the two giants sell four out of five bottles of wine bought for drinking at home.

There is one worrying aspect, however. The survey found that "convenience, price and range far outweigh factors such as friendly staff and information on wine" when customers decide where to buy. Let's hope Asda (19 per cent) and Safeway (18 per cent) don't take the message to heart and instruct their staff to tell wine buyers to "get knotted".

If Sir Ian or anyone else wants to hire Skinner and Baddiel, fantasy footballers and word-smiths of the current England (why anthem, thank twice). James Herring, the duo's agent, was recently asked by a PR huckster how much it would cost to hire them. Mr Herring replied: "If you can afford anything north of £30,000, love, you're in business."

Nursing your hangover, dear reader, take pity on poor Ray Nethercott, fanatical Liverpool supporter and md of Allied Carpets.

The company not only announced its final yesterday, mere hours before England's date with destiny. Mr Nethercott also arranged a presentation to fund managers Fidelity at 6.30pm - half an hour before kick-off. The briefing could not be postponed as it was being beamed to the US, where "soccer" is seen as an effective non-sport for foreigners.

Mr Nethercott said yesterday lunchtime: "I think if I race through the presentation at 200 miles an hour I may just get it finished." Fingers crossed that he made it.

Chilean copper giant cuts Global link

PETER RODGERS
Financial Editor

A main copper supplier has suspended business dealings for next year with Global Minerals and Metals of New York as a result of speculation about its involvement in the Sumitomo copper scandal.

Codelco, the Chilean state-owned copper producer, has put on hold its contracts to supply copper to Global in 1997.

Global and its president, David Campbell, were subpoenaed last week by the New York attorney general to supply documents relating to their dealings with Sumitomo and its fallen, former star copper trader, Yasuo Hamanaka, to a grand jury investigation.

Global is also helping the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission with its civil investigation into the market and has been caught up along with

several other firms such as Winchester Commodities of the UK in inquiries on both sides of the Atlantic into how Sumitomo's copper trader lost £1.2bn over the last 10 years.

Among the lines of inquiry, investigators are seeking to establish links between problems at Codelco, which lost \$170m two years ago because of unauthorised trading by an executive, and the Sumitomo affair.

Elliot Sloane, a spokesman

for Global, said: "Codelco is saying they are going to honour their existing 1996 contracts, and they are going to come back to the table sometime this year and talk about next year." He added: "They never renew their contracts this early in the calendar year."

Mr Sloane said Codelco informed Global before Sumitomo announced losses of \$1.8bn on 13 June. Codelco is thought to be a substantial customer of

Global which also has extensive dealings with Zambia.

Mr Sloane said that Codelco has become wary as a result of speculation about Codelco and Sumitomo "so they decided to take a wait-and-see approach, let everything die down and come back and talk to us in the fall".

Two of Global's traders in Chile, Carlos Derpsch and Owen Guerrini, left for "personal reasons" in recent days. Mr Sloane said Mr Derpsch

and Mr Guerrini were cleared of involvement in the Codelco scandal, which he claimed was "totally separate" from Sumitomo.

"Sumitomo are still buying copper from Global. All our bankers are still banking us, and all our brokers are still trading us," Mr Sloane added.

London copper traders said that squeezes in the copper market linked with Sumitomo may date back to June 1988.

Vendome dismisses bid rumours

NIGEL COPE

Vendome, the Swiss luxury goods group that owns the Cartier, Dunhill and Mont Blanc brands, quashed rumours yesterday that the controlling Richemont group was set to buy the 30 per cent of the Vendome shares it does not already own.

Lord Douro, deputy chairman, said: "These rumours have been circulating for a couple of weeks but Richemont has made it clear that it has no intention of making a bid for the whole of the company."

The resolution was hammered out in a Luxembourg

board meeting on Tuesday attended by Johann Rupert, chief executive of Richemont, and also a director of Vendome.

The announcement came as Vendome reported disappointing results that were held back by the strength of the Swiss franc as well as string of "exceptional events" in Europe and Japan. Atributable profits in the year to March fell 0.2 per cent to £193m. The company blamed social unrest in France, reactions to nuclear tests in the Pacific which led to reduced tourism, and the Kobe earthquake in Japan which destroyed two of the company's shops.

Many of these events affected sales in October, November and December, which are traditionally important sales periods for Vendome.

The unrest caused by nuclear tests in the Pacific led to a sharp fall in Asian tourists to France which further damaged sales. Sales of jewellery and watches were strong though sales of smoking accessories and women's clothing were disappointing. Jewellery sales increased by 7.4 per cent. Sales of writing instruments edged 1.4 per cent higher.

Sales to the Fast East rose by 8.3 per cent.

Liffe looks to futures with commodities link

PETER RODGERS

London's financial futures and commodities exchanges are to merge on 16 September to form the only organisation in the world that will trade a complete range of financial, commodity and equity futures and options.

Plans for the merged market include the development of trading in wheat futures across Europe to take advantage of the expected reductions in support for farmers under the Common Agricultural Policy, which will increase the demand for hedging.

Daniel Hodgson, chief executive of Liffe - the market famous for its open outcry dealings and the bright jackets worn by floor traders - said development of wheat futures would be complex.

This would be because of the variations in the types of wheat required by bakers in different countries, "but there is no doubt it is an opportunity for the exchange and it should have pan-European appeal".

The merger is through a £10.2m offer by Liffe - the London International Futures and Options Exchange - for the London Commodity Exchange, which has traded coffee, cocoa and sugar since 1954.

The offer will be accompanied by an invitation to members of both exchanges to subscribe for new shares in Liffe at a price of £15,000 each, which will give a right to trade commodities on the merged market. Of the LCE's 44 floor members, 29 are from the same organisations as Liffe members.

Robin Woodhead, chief executive of the LCE - who will remain as a consultant for six months after the merger - said,



In full cry: Traders in action on the floor at Liffe

"Four years ago the LCE had a very difficult time. But we have had three successful years that have enabled the LCE to think about long-term planning. We came to the conclusion that we needed much greater resources to maintain and expand our expertise."

An outline agreement to merge with Liffe was reached last October, after discussions with other potential partners, including London's International Petroleum Exchange, ended.

The merged market will be an expanded floor in Liffe's building by Cannon Street station in the City, or split between that building and the old Stock Exchange floor in Threadneedle

Street, which Liffe is to take over from the autumn.

If the markets both fit into Liffe's present floor, the Stock Exchange floor may be used as an emergency back-up.

Mr Hodgson made clear Liffe did not expect to make any radical changes as a result of lessons learnt from the Sumitomo losses on the London Metal Exchange.

Mr Hodgson said 40 recommendations were made last summer by a global task force on the best practice for futures and options regulation.

"We looked at our practices in the light of those recommendations and we scored an 'A' star," he said.

Companies gain from new ASB goodwill policy

ROGER TRAPP

Balance-sheet values of companies as varied as Cadbury Schweppes confectionery and drinks group and the PR consultancy Shandwick Group could climb and earnings ratios fall if plans to change the accounting treatment of goodwill and other intangible assets published today are adopted.

The Accounting Standards Board hopes the proposals will defuse one of the longest-running rows in acquisition accounting. Its exposure draft Fred 12 recommends goodwill and intangible assets, such as licences, franchises, publishing titles and brands, are capitalised as assets on the balance sheet.

Then the general rule would be that goodwill should be written off gradually - amortised against earnings - but it would also be possible to retain goodwill provided regular reviews showed no impairment in value.

This would mean that ordinary shareholders' funds would be strengthened - since they would include amounts previously written off to reserves - but the return on equity would look less impressive. It is understood that other international standard-setters are looking at this approach.

The proposals - developed after extensive consultation over the past three years - represent a significant change from present practice. SSAP22, introduced by the ASB's predecessor, the Accounting Standards Committee, allows a choice of accounting treatments. Its preferred approach - used in the vast majority of acquisitions - is immediate elimination against reserves, though it also permits capitalisation as an asset, with subsequent write-off by systematic amortisation through the profit and loss account.

The ASB points out that the preferred approach has been rejected internationally and been criticised for giving the impression that the acquiring company's net worth has been depleted or even eliminated, and for causing financial statements to overstate the rates of return achieved on acquired investments.

This has subsequently led to companies reducing the amounts attributed to purchased goodwill by separately valuing brands and similar intangible assets as identifiable assets on the balance sheet. But the ASB believes that this is anomalous.

Sir David Tweedie, ASB chairman, said the proposals - which must be commented upon by 25 October - provided "a solid and constructive solution to a very longstanding problem". He was supported by other leading accountants, such as Peter Holgate, technical partner at Coopers & Lybrand, who said they "seem to have the best chance of attracting support".

Global cuts out

Amsterdam 135

Nice 140

Barcelona 140

0990 29 29 29

business

When rates hinge on expectations great and small

We are richer than ever before. The UK personal sector's net wealth stood at around £2,800bn at the end of last year – an increase of more than 80 per cent since 1980, even after allowing for the effects of inflation.

Yet it has taken four years, with interest rates close to their lowest levels for a generation, to spark only a modest recovery in the housing market, and despite the tax cuts announced in last November's Budget, consumer spending this year will rise at only half the pace reached in the late 1980s.

There is more to this reluctance to spend money than the conventional story of job insecurity suggests. There are hard financial reasons too. In many ways, consumers have been during the 1980s like over-extended companies, building up the size of the balance sheet without regard to short-term considerations like the need to maintain some cushion against future shocks, such as rising interest rates.

When it comes to liquidity – the ability to pay the bills on time – the structure of the balance sheet matters more than its size. During the 1980s, the rise in the personal sector's wealth was dominated by two factors: the housing market boom; and the explosion in the value of holdings of life assurance and pension funds, which together accounted for two-thirds of the increase in gross personal assets between 1980 and 1994. Liquid assets, mostly bank and building society deposits, rose much less quickly than the stock of debt, most of which was acquired in order to buy houses. Later, an increasing proportion of the debt burden represented equity withdrawal as houses became the provider of funds for ex-



ECONOMIC VIEW
IAN SHEPHERDSON

otic holidays, boats, and new cars. All the while, however, the ability of consumers to cope with a sudden upturn in interest rates was being eroded: the ratio of consumers' liquid assets to their base rate-linked debts was falling, even though their total wealth was rising rapidly. The headline numbers said that consumers were growing ever richer, but the devil in the details said that they were becoming ever more susceptible to changes in policy. When the crunch came, with interest rates doubling to

subsidised as would-be buyers looked askance at 15 per cent mortgage rates when average earnings were rising at 9 per cent.

The subsequent fall in nominal house prices has been instrumental in forcing people to recognise the extent to which the changing structure of the balance sheet has increased their exposure to the effects of higher interest rates. Consumers have become sensitive to a level of interest rates – and to small changes in interest rate expectations – which

If markets don't like the Budget ... the housing recovery could be snuffed out

15 per cent between May 1988 and October 1989, consumers were hit much harder than previous experience would have suggested.

Just as over-gear companies find it difficult to sell pieces of machinery to meet interest charges, so households cannot, in aggregate, sell their properties to avoid the pain of higher mortgage rates. It is possible for some individuals to do this, especially in the early stages of a downturn, but it is not an option open to everyone.

It took a while for higher rates to do their work – after all, when rates began to rise the boom had acquired its own momentum – but eventually the housing explosion

only a few years ago would have had no effect at all.

The best evidence for this effect comes from the housing market. The graphic (top right) shows that the violent swings in mortgage approvals over the past few years have been more or less entirely explained by shifts in the markets' expectations about future interest rates moves. In comparison, the reductions in mortgage interest tax relief have had a trivial effect on the market.

There are at least two mechanisms which explain why expectations have become so much more important. The first is the rise of the fixed-rate mortgage, which came from nowhere to capture 63 per cent of the new

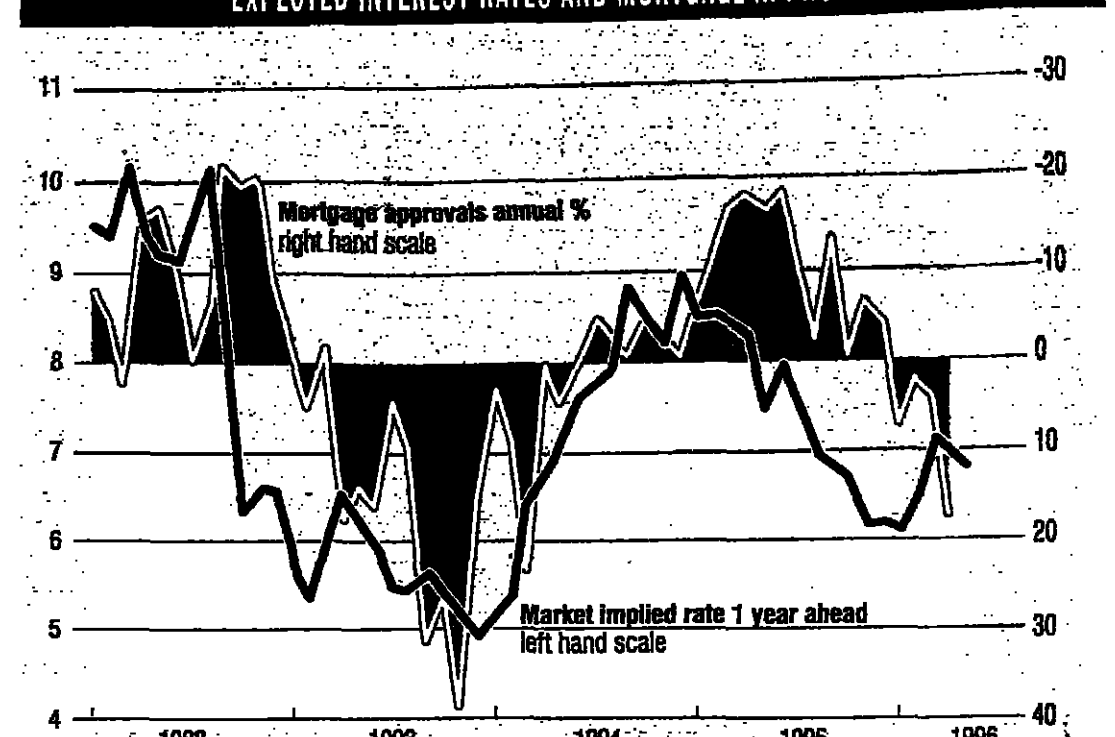
mortgage market in the second quarter of 1994. Fixed rates are driven more or less mechanically by the market-determined yield on short-dated gilts, so rising expectations of short rates, which lift gilt yields, push up the cost of fixed-rate mortgages. This was certainly the case in 1994, when short-rate expectations rose sharply after the US Fed increased rates unexpectedly. Gilt yields rose sharply, and fixed mortgage rates rose by around 2 per cent in less than two months.

The housing market duly plunged, and the share of fixed-rate mortgages fell to only 31 per cent by the end of the year.

The second factor is more subtle. The markets' expectations of future base rates are not particularly reliable, for they tend to exaggerate actual moves in base rates in both directions. But because they are technically unbiased (unlike the views of economists) and available on a real-time basis to anyone with a news wire screen, they are often used by the media as a convenient guide. Short sterling rates therefore have an important impact on how monetary policy is discussed by the newspapers, in the personal financial pages, and in the economics columns. This was certainly the case in the spring of last year, when short sterling was discounting base rates at around 8.5 per cent by March 1996, despite base rates then standing at only 6.75 per cent.

The markets noted that base rates had been increased three times in half-point stages in five months, starting in September 1994, and they expected a similar rate of increase over the next year. Mortgage demand promptly collapsed, despite the standard variable mortgage

EXPECTED INTEREST RATES AND MORTGAGE APPROVALS



rate rising by only 0.75 per cent from its low.

The turnaround in the summer was equally fast, after Mr Clarke defied requests for higher interest rates from the Governor of the Bank of England in May and June. The markets' view of the likely future path of short rates plunged by more than 2 per cent and mortgage demand began to recover rapidly. Yet actual base rates were unchanged between February and

December. If the change in consumers' sensitivity to interest rate expectations is effectively permanent (and the modest easing of the liquidity problem shown on the chart suggests that it is likely to persist for many years) then it is both a blessing and a curse to the authorities. On the upside, the absolute level of interest rates is likely to remain very low by the standards of the Seventies and Eighties, and the increases which might be necessary in the

future to reduce the risk of inflation should also be much smaller than we have become used to. But the flipside is that if the markets don't like the Budget in November, perhaps because unsustainable tax cuts are offered, then interest rate expectations will rise, and the housing recovery could be snuffed out – just in time for the election.

The author is Chief UK Economist at HSBC Markets.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Market	Spot
US	1.5425	5.3	9.6	1000	0.6542
Canada	2.0882	11.3	30.7	12603	2.1
Germany	2.3879	49.41	140.10	12587	26.24
France	2.3772	49.41	140.10	12587	26.24
Italy	2.3772	49.41	140.10	12587	26.24
Japan	189.94	75.70	225.28	10932	45.44
ECU	1.2448	5.71	45.40	12587	26.24
Belgium	48.509	12.7	32.25	11448	6.5
Denmark	50.944	59.15	148.25	12587	26.24
Netherlands	54.634	65.57	167.17	12587	26.24
Ireland	0.9728	7.3	20.14	12587	26.24
Norway	1.0072	120.50	310.200	12587	26.24
Spain	168.25	21.31	69.88	12587	26.24
Sweden	1.0388	0.4	1.9	12587	26.24
Switzerland	1.0492	54.45	162.32	12587	26.24
Australia	1.0502	20.31	67.85	12587	26.24
Hong Kong	1.037	101.61	224.70	12587	26.24
Malaysia	3.8508	0.0	0.0	12587	26.24
New Zealand	2.2818	43.67	133.158	12587	26.24
Saudi Arabia	5.7553	0.0	0.0	12587	26.24
Singapore	2.1770	0.0	0.0	12587	26.24

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	Dollar
Argentina	1540	0.0097
Australia	153949	1.07658
Brazil	15425	0.001
China	823307	0.0001
Egypt	53058	34408
Finland	75068	0.0001
Ghana	253351	0.0001
Greenland	373408	0.0001
India	533400	0.0001
Kuwait	0.0452	0.0001

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount; subtract from spot rate. Rates quoted low to high are at a premium; add to spot rate.

*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals. For the latest forward exchange rates call 0991 123 3033. Calls cost 35p per minute (cheap rates) 45p other times.

Interest Rates

UK	5.75%	Germany	2.50%	US	Prime	8.75%	Japan	Discount	0.50%
France	3.80%	Italy	10.00%	Canada	Prime	7.00%	Belgium	Discount	2.50%
Netherlands	3.00%	Denmark	5.00%	Sweden	10-day Repo	7.25%	Switzerland	Discount	3.50%
Advances	2.80%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Avg)	8.00%	Lombard	4.25%		

Bond Yields

Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %	Country	5yr yield %	10yr yield %
UK	7.1%	7.4%	Netherlands	5%	6.1%
US	6.25%	6.7%	Germany	5.0%	5.5%
Japan	5.91%	6.3%	France	5.1%	5.5%
Australia	6.1%	6.5%	Sweden	5.1%	5.5%
Canada	5.38%	5.5%	Switzerland	5.1%	5.5%
France	5.1%	5.5%	ECU	5.1%	5.5%

Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Local Authority Depos	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Discount Market Depos	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Treasury Bills (91 days)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
Local Govt (3 months)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%
ECU (3 months)	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%

Tourist Rates

£ Buys	2 Buys	£ Buys	2 Buys
Australia/Dollar	1.8825	France/Franc	7.7200
Australia/Schilling	16.8000	Germany/Mark	2.2850
Belgium/Franc	46.8000	Greece/Drachma	394.5000
Canada/Dollar	2.0400	Hong Kong/Dollar	1.0000
Cyprus/Pound	0.7000	Ireland/Pound	0.7800
Denmark/Krone	0.4800	Italy/Lira	2.0000
Finland/Marke	0.0050	Japan/Yen	100.0000
		Malta/Lira	0.0050

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est. Cont'd	Open interest
Long Gilt	106.27	106.30	106.29	423
Short Gilt	93.73	93.70	93.74	423
Long Euro	106.27	106.30	106.29	423
Short Euro	93.73	93.70	93.74	423
Long Swiss	106.27	106.30	106.29	423
Short Swiss	93.73	93.70	93.74	423
Long Yen	106.27	106.30	106.29	423
Short Yen	93.73	93.70	93.74	423
Long Dollar	106.27	106.30	106.29	423
Short Dollar	93.73	93.70	93.74	423

Life FT-SE Index Option

Series	3600	3700	3750	3800	3850
Call/Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
July	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oct	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Energy

Crude Oil (Brent)	Gas Oil (Brent)	WTI	Products (Brent)
Aug 92	22.00	22.00	22.00
Sep 92	22.00	22.00	22.00
Oct 92	22.00	22.00	22.00
Nov 92	22.00	22.00	22.00
Dec 92	22.00	22.00	22.00

Commodity Indices

Index	1990=100	1991=100	1992=100	1993=100	1994=100
Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Oil	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Grain	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Metals	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Stocks	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Industrial Metals

Aluminium HG	104.75	104.75	104.75	104.75
Aluminium Alloy	1255-1265	1255-1265	1255-1265	1255-1265
Copper A	1835-1840	1835-1840	1835-1840	1835-1840
Lead	7755-7805	7755-7805	7755-7805	7755-7805
Nickel	1485-1495	1485-1495	1485-1495	1485-1495
Zinc	1004-1005	1004-1005	1004-1005	1004-1005

Precious Metals

Platinum	300.00	300.00	300.00	300.00
Palladium	150.00	150.00	150.00	150.00
Gold spot	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00
Gold Bullion	350.00	350.00	350.00	350.00

Agricultural

Cocoa	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Coffee	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Barley	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Wheat	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Maize	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

May	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
June	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
July	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Aug	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Sep	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
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sport

Seles falls by the wayside

GUY HODGSON

There have been times at Wimbledon this week when it seemed the words women and surprise might never come in close conjunction again. The impression was wholly wrong. Just when it seemed the top players were sweeping everything out of their path, Monica Seles stumbled, recovered and then fell out of the tournament.

The No 2 seed, winner of nine Grand Slam titles, was beaten 7-5, 5-7, 6-4 by Katarina Stoenikova, a shock underdog by her opponent's lack of pedigree. The Slovakian had visited the All England Club three times before and on each occasion had been beaten in the first round. Yesterday the world No 59 shattered what had appeared to be the rigid predictability in the women's game.

Instead of being overawed on No 1 Court, she fought like an alley cat against Seles, who was playing in only her second match at the All England since returning from a four-year absence caused by her lay-off after her stabbing in Hamburg in April 1993.

Stoenikova combined a mixture of power and guile, drawing the strength out of her opponent's shots with sliced backhands and then going for winners with thumping blows on the other wing. Normally it is Seles who hits the corners; this time it was the slender 23-year-old blonde at the other end of the court.

"I had chances to close out the third set millions of times," Seles said, discounting any suggestion that a halt for rain in the deciding match had disrupted her rhythm. "I felt I wasn't going for shots. I was waiting for her to make mistakes and that didn't happen. Her tactics were better than mine."

Asked why she kept return-

ing to Stoenikova's backhand which was causing her so many problems she replied simply: "I don't know. I made many errors. I have to learn from them."

Seles defeated Stoenikova 6-1, 6-1 on the way to winning the Australian Open in January but June has been a bad month for a player who admits to a timidity that was not there before her enforced break. In Paris she lost in the quarter-finals and now she has gone out in the second round, her earliest departure from Wimbledon. Her only success was last week's win at Eastbourne, a humble crumb of comfort.

Not that Seles did not have the chance to extricate herself from the court where she lost to Zina Garrison in 1990. In the first set she squandered five successive games from a 5-3 lead and in the deciding she led 2-0 and 4-2. Stoenikova continued to go for her shots, however, breaking twice, the second time to 15. Seles' final stroke, a misdirected double-handed forehand down the line, forced by the weight of the reply, was a cameo of the whole match.

If Seles' defeat was a huge shock, there were tremors in the shape of defeats for two other seeds - Amanda Coetzer and Irina Spilaea, ranked 14th and 15th in the women's event.

Coetzer, from South Africa, has a nickname, the "Mighty Atom", which probably owes more to her size than to her explosive tennis although she did reach the semi-finals of the Australian Open and reached the last 16 at Wimbledon two years ago. Yesterday she was split open 7-6, 2-6, 6-3 by the American Meredith McGrath.

Romania's Spilaea had the distinction of being the only seed to drop a set until yesterday but went one better, surrendering 6-3, 2-6, 6-4 to Argentina's Ines Gorrochategui although both players should be put in the context that neither seed had



Nail-biting: Monica Seles contemplates defeat on No 1 Court yesterday

Photograph: Fiona Hanson/PA

beaten her opponent before. The prize for the most one-sided match of the day had to go to Anke Huber's 6-2, 6-1 thrashing of Pam Shriver which was the sort of contest that would have had boxing spectators buying for the promoter's blood if anyone had the gall to put it in a ring.

The Centre Court crowd is just about the easiest in the world to wing a sentimental tear from but even this lot can recognise ancient hump when they see it, and although they gave Shriver sympathetic ap-

plause at the end there was a definite "goodbye and don't come back" feel to it. We like you Pam, but not that much.

The American was never the most sprightly thing on two legs even in her prime but a few days before her 34th birthday she resembled those super tankers that take 20 miles of ocean and half a day to change direction. Huber, the fifth seed, merely had to switch the play from left to right and the point came to an embarrassing halt.

As a finale yesterday, Shriver achieved the equivalent of a

golfer swinging and missing on the 18th tee, making a double-fault with a serve that bounced a few feet in front of her and then bounced over the net. "So that's it for me on Centre Court," she said. "A ping-pong serve. I wouldn't have minded hitting a net out one just to prove I could actually hit one over the net."

Shriver exchanged glances with the referee, Alan Mills, as she left the court confirming that they both knew her days as a singles player are numbered. "We both sort of looked at each other," she said, "and

thought 'well, this is probably the last one out here, possibly the last one anywhere'. I didn't get too emotional after the match, I was too embarrassed. But I got very emotional beforehand."

Shriver, who is working for BBC television during the fortnight, said she was hoping to use her influence to make sure no highlights of the match were screened. "I'm going to see if I can get up without hitting my head," she said on her way out. Her best shot of the day was saved for herself.

Court circular

Becker lets a title slip away

A famous Lord of the Manor title - being sold by the Princess of Wales' brother, Earl Spencer - was yesterday bought at auction for a world record £188,100. The price for the lordship of Wimbledon beat the previous record of £110,000 paid for the lordship of Stratford-upon-Avon.

The identity of the buyer remained a secret following the frantic telephone bidding at Stationer's Hall, central London, but there was immediate speculation that the buyer was the three-time Wimbledon champion, Boris Becker, who has particular fondness for the tournament.

However, the German snappered that rumour when he denied he was now a lord. "I am quite happy with being Boris Becker," he said.

Robert Smith, chairman of the Memorial Society, dealt with a welter of bids from

cities around the world, including New York, Geneva and Brazil. "We thought it might go for £100,000 but never believed it would go for as much as it did. It is unlike anything I have experienced at an auction before," he said.

Asked to comment on who the new owner might be he said: "It could well be some connected with tennis. If it is one of the big sports firms, like Nike or Slazenger, the publicity they would get would be enormous."

The bidding had been like a real tennis match with the two combatants matching each other point for point until it reached two sets all and match point.

Smith told the assembled bidders that Earl Spencer, a "reluctant seller", needed the cash to pay for renovating his stately home, Althorpe in Northamptonshire. The title had been in Earl Spencer's family since 1744.



Singles, but no shade for Pam Shriver yesterday as she bowed out to Anke Huber Photograph: David Asdown

And mother came, too

Pam Shriver made what will probably prove to be her last singles appearance on Centre Court. Although her 6-2, 6-1 defeat against Anke Huber was hardly the ideal way to bow out, she received a rapturous reception from the crowd.

Leading the applause was Shriver's mother, Margot. It was her first time at the event with her husband Sam, and only her fourth visit to the All England Club.

Pam asked her mother to attend only five days before, when she was feeling a little nostalgic about her 17th ap-

pearance at the event. "When I started to think about Wimbledon last week, I realised it might be my last time to play and I wanted to have one of my family with me. I talked to Dad first and asked him if he could handle being without Mom for a week or so, and he thought it would be OK."

Of course, a hidden agenda for the invitation could have been Shriver's 34th birthday on 4 July. She has not celebrated a birthday at home since 1978 and the lure of a home-made cake may well have proved irresistible.

Milligan's marathon

JOHN ROBERTS

There were some notable winners in the men's singles yesterday - Boris Becker, Michael Stich, and Luke Milligan, whose amazing adventure continued when the 19-year-old from Middlesex advanced to the third round after winning his second five-set marathon in 24 hours.

Milligan's victory guaranteed that Britain would be represented in the fourth round for the fifth year consecutively. His next opponent will be a compatriot, either Tim Henman or Danny Sapsford.

Having defeated the Swedish Davis Cup player Jonas Bjorkman on Tuesday, Milligan survived a battle of endurance against Nicolas Pietrangeli, of Ecuador, 6-4, 6-2, 6-7, 6-1 in three hours and 46 minutes.

Until this week, Milligan had not won a match other than in satellite and Challenger events and his world ranking, No 278, was 244 places beneath Bjorkman's and 192 below Pietrangeli's. Milligan eventually triumphed yesterday by converting his eighth match point - an hour and 50 minutes after his first - and during the final two sets the players took turns in hobbling about Court No 13 with cramp.

The scene had been altogether different in the third set. Milligan, swift to assert himself, led 6-5 and had two match points on his opponent's serve. Pietrangeli saved them, and forced a tie-break. Although Milligan recovered from 1-5, he lost the shoot-out, 5-7.

In the fourth set, Milligan led 3-1 and 5-4, but in pain from the cramp in his left leg took salt tablets during a change-over. He was broken when serving for the match for the first time, two double-faults contributing to his problems.

There was further drama after Milligan broke back to 6-5 and called for the trainer, who told him, "I can't touch you." Grand Slam rules do not allow treatment for what are regarded as injuries associated with conditioning.

Although Milligan reached his third match point in the next game, Pietrangeli erased it with a forehand drive, broke for 6-6, and won the tie-break, 7-3, to level the match.

Pietrangeli requested the trainer after Milligan had taken a 2-0 lead in the final set, but could only be given tablets and advice. He was warned for delaying the progress of the fourth game as Milligan continued to dominate.

Serving for the match for the third time, at 6-1, the Briton double-faulted on his sixth

match point and netted a forehand on the seventh, before finally bringing relief to himself and the spectators by delivering a winning backhand volley.

Colin Beecher, from Kent, became the first of Britain's second-round contenders to fall, losing to Italy's Renzo Furlan, 6-4, 7-5, 6-2.

Becker, the No 2 seed, made an uncomfortable start to his match against Tomas Carbonell, finding himself a set and a break down against the Spaniard before raising his game to win, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2. "He's a very tough player," Becker said. "For 10 or 15 minutes he doesn't do much, and all of a sudden he hits winners off great serves. He made some amazing shots to break me."

Stich, the 10th seed, caught up with the rest of the top half of the draw by winning his first round match which had been suspended overnight. Play resumed with Stich leading the Dutchman Sjeng Schalken, one set all and 4-1, and the German did not delay in completing the victory, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.

The ninth-seeded Thomas Enqvist was eliminated by the American MaliVai Washington, 6-4, 7-6, 6-3, but then the 22-year-old Swede has hardly set the place alight, his win against the Canadian Albert Chang in the first round being his first in three visits.

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Sherpa Tenzing must have felt it after he planted the flagpole and boiled up the billycan for his boss. The main job had been completed but there was still work to be done.

That sensation will have touched the American slingshot victors of the first round when they emerged to carry on the job yesterday. Jonathan Stark and Doug Flach accounted for Jim Courier and Andre Agassi respectively on Monday, but were faced with more prosaic opposition second time around.

Both men were shunted to the backwaters, dismissed to the adjoining courts No 8 and 9 where, unannounced, players can hear bursts of applause all around but still know that none of it is for them. Even at this early stage of the tournament, pale, dusty patches are spreading around the baseline and little, broken-off tufts of earth have to be flicked away from the service area.

Stark and his opponent, Mark Knowles of the Bahamas, are well over 6ft tall and if you were introduced to them in a bar the first word that would come to mind is "sir". The pair would have made good bookends for the Great Wall of

China. On court, however, tennis players tend to disprove Darwin's theory of evolution, surviving on a banana and water diet we associate more readily with our near relatives in the trees. Stark brought a bunch on court and washed it down with alternate swigs of water and Coca-Cola (you would not have wanted to be near him in the bus queue back home).

Big men invariably mean big serves and one phrase that did not crop up consistently in the court-side cheering was "good rally". Knowles started the match in a bandana, and looked as frightening as an Indian about to descend on a circle of wagons, but by the end the hegemon was more a bandage for battered pride. The short exchanges were invariably settled in Stark's favour as he moved to a 6-2, 6-1, 6-2 success.

It would be a surprise if Stark played someone he was not on first-name terms with in the next round. It has been Christmas-card opposition so far, as Courier is a friend of long standing, and he has won a doubles tournament with Knowles. But then the all-American boy is very good at relationships. Last year he met his mixed doubles partner for the first time just five minutes before they were due on court here and went on to win the

title. It may have helped that she was called Martina Navratilova.

The name Flach is also better known in doubles surroundings. Doug's older brother, Ken, was an outstanding men's doubles practitioner who won the title in SW19 twice in the late 1980s. So strong is Ken's connection with his old partner there are probably still those around who think his surname is Flach-And-Robert-Seguso.

Flach went on a tour of the capital's sights on Tuesday, studiously avoiding the London Dungeon in case some distraught Agassi fans were still around. This was a Groundhog match from the first round with Jared Palmer, like Agassi, blasting away in the first set before deteriorating. Flach won 2-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

Afterwards he outlined how his life had changed in the last few days. "It's been really wild," he said. "I called my Mum after the Agassi match and CBS was in her living room." He did not mean the channel was showing on her television.

Flach has been shaking hands, giving interviews and fielding phone calls with great grace and treating the whole experience as a compliment. He clearly has some way to go before he can be considered as a top sportsman.

THE INDEPENDENT

WIMBLEDON MATCHLINE

0891 555690

• Latest scores and results
• Today's completed results

VISITORLINE

0891 555691

• Getting there
• Order of play
• Weather outlook
• Booking tickets for '97

FAXLINE

0891 662246

Dial the above number from a handset linked to a fax machine and choose from the following options:

• Knockout chart
• Order of play
• Visitor info

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TODAY'S RESULTS FROM WIMBLEDON

Men's singles

Holder: P Sampras (US)

First round

M Stich (Swi) bt S Schalken (Neth) 6-3

Second round

J Stark (US) bt M Knowles (Bah) 6-2 6-1

R Furlan (It) bt C Becker (GB) 6-4 7-5

M Washington (US) bt T Enqvist (Swe) 6-3 6-3

D Flach (US) bt J Palmer (US) 2-6 6-3 6-3

D Wheaton (US) bt G Raoux (Fr) 6-4 7-5

P Pietrangeli (Ecu) bt N Pietrangeli (Ven) 6-2

N Gorrochategui (Arg) bt S Spilaea (Rom) 6-4 7-5

N Gorrochategui (Arg) bt S Spilaea (Rom) 6-4 7-5

M Stich (Swi) bt S Schalken (Neth) 6-3

J Stark (US) bt M Knowles (Bah) 6-2 6-1

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N Gorrochategui (Arg) bt S Spilaea (Rom) 6-4 7-5

M Stich (Swi) bt S Schalken (Neth) 6-3

J Stark (US) bt M Knowles (Bah) 6-2 6-1

R Furlan (It) bt C Becker (GB) 6-4 7-5

M Washington (US) bt T Enqvist (Swe) 6-3 6-3

TODAY'S ORDER OF PLAY

2.0 start on Centre Court and Court One

12.0 on others except where stated

CENTRE COURT: P SAMPRAS (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

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Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

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Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Bjorkman (Swe) and P Sampras (US) v M

Court One: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Two: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Three: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Four: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Five: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Six: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Seven: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Eight: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Nine: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Ten: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Eleven: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twelve: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Thirteen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Fourteen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Fifteen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Sixteen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Seventeen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Eighteen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Nineteen: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twenty: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twenty-One: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twenty-Two: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twenty-Three: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twenty-Four: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

Court Twenty-Five: J Bjorkman (Swe) v P Sampras (US)

THE SEEDS' PROGRESS

MEN'S SINGLES

Holder: Pete Sampras (United States)

2nd round

3rd round

4th round

5th round

6th round

7th round

8th round

9th round

10th round

11th round

12th

sport

Monty is content to stay at home

Golf

Colin Montgomerie's failure to win the US Open earlier this month will not persuade him to pack his bags and join Nick Faldo in America.

"Number one in my life is not golf," the Scot said yesterday on the eve of the French Open in Paris. "In fact, it's not even second or third. If I was a bachelor or newly married, I think I would have gone to the States full time by now. But my family come first, then it's relaxing and being at home."

"There will be no change in my schedule next season. I'm planning to play 20 tournaments in Europe again and only eight to 10 in America."

"If waiting for a major really started to bother me, I would consider joining their tour. But I've not reached that stage, and to uproot my family would put me under so much pressure."

Montgomerie was one off the lead in Detroit with six to play, but he double-bogeyed the short 13th and eventually dropped to 10th.

"I gave everything I had at Oakland Hills and I was mentally whacked by the finish," he said. "I hit most fairways and most greens again, and I feel that one of these times my green work will be up to that level and I will win. I feel that it will happen and it's just a matter of being patient."

Seve Ballesteros goes into tournament having fallen out of the world's top 50 for the first time since the ranking system began 10 years ago. However, Ballesteros, who did not qualify for the US Open a fortnight ago and has not had a top 10 finish since his 54th European tour victory at the Spanish Open in May last year, remains sanguine about his future.

The 39-year-old, world No 1 seven years ago, spoke about the possibility of picking himself for next year's Ryder Cup at Valderrama. On being appointed Europe's captain earlier this year, Ballesteros insisted on a new rule which allows him to drop out of the side even if he qualifies. That still applies, but equally he says that if he does not qualify he could hand himself a wild card.

"My decision will be based not on results, but on a feeling," he said. "I will not play if I feel I am not going to make a good contribution, but if I think I can I will pick myself."

Ballesteros, who won the first of his four French titles in 1977, has not appeared in the championship since it moved to Le Golf National five years ago. The course has also attracted Bernhard Langer for the first time and 11 members of last year's Ryder Cup side are taking part. The only absentee is Faldo.

The event is part of the run-in to the Open championship at Royal Lytham in three weeks' time. That is a week to which Ballesteros is looking forward. He won his first major at course in 1979 and triumphed there again eight years ago, thanks to a closing 65.

"There are always places where you can see yourself scoring better than others and that's one of them. It's a fantastic course and I just hope that my game is good when I get there."

TODAY'S FIXTURES
Speedway: Chris Manchesters, the overseas champion, has been stripped of his title and is one of 13 riders thrown out of this year's World Championship. The rebels have no right of appeal against the decision by the sport's world governing body, the FIM, which follows their strike action earlier this month. Joking Belle Vue's Manchester will be Jason Lyons, who has been named as the new champion. The rebels have no right of appeal against the decision by the sport's world governing body, the FIM, which follows their strike action earlier this month. Joking Belle Vue's Manchester will be Jason Lyons, who has been named as the new champion.

Other sports
Tennis: Wimbledon Championships.

THE INDEPENDENT CRICKET LINES
International Tour Line
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All Counties
News and Results
0891 525 075

Derbyshire: 0891 525 370
Durham: 0891 525 371
Essex: 0891 525 372
Gloucestershire: 0891 525 373
Glamorgan: 0891 525 374
Leicestershire: 0891 525 375
Lancashire: 0891 525 376
Kent: 0891 525 377
Middlesex: 0891 525 378
Northants: 0891 525 379
Nottinghamshire: 0891 525 380
Somerset: 0891 525 381
Surrey: 0891 525 382
Sussex: 0891 525 383
Warwickshire: 0891 525 384
Worcestershire: 0891 525 385
Yorkshire: 0891 525 386

TODAY'S NUMBER
7,000

The total in pounds that the Royal Bank of Scotland has given to employees who compete for their country. Since the scheme started in January, 10 staff members have received training grants up to £1,000.

TOUR DE FRANCE: Britain's great hope for the great race starting on Saturday talks to Robin Nicholl

Boardman ready to do himself justice

The red, white and blue flag fluttered noisily high in the Alps. "C'mon, Chris-a," screamed the holder of the Union flag. Words of encouragement that had a hidden menace for the approaching cyclist in yellow and blue.

It was not the Tour de France, but the Brits had still travelled to shout for Chris Boardman in the Dauphine Libere stage race, one of the Tour's build-up races. "They had come specifically to watch the race, and I was passing them in 15th place and a couple of minutes behind the leader," Boardman said. "I felt like apologising. I really would like to give people what they want."

"They want someone to get behind and shout for. It's like the football. I feel that, and it's a frustration if things don't go well. I wanted to do something for them."

That feeling will be as nothing when Boardman sets out on his third Tour on Saturday. The race's pressurised atmosphere exposes like nothing else the anxieties of a long-distance bike racer, and Boardman has a big one. To finish. He did not make it through his first two Tours, and his main aim is to arrive in Paris in three weeks' time having survived 3,955 kilometres and 24 mountains.

After electrifying the 1994 Tour by taking the leader's yellow jersey with a debut victory in the opening time trial at Lille, he left on the 11th day in a planned pull-out.

Last year everyone was stunned by an even sharper exit. Minutes into his second Tour the pressure was on and Boardman could not resist. He finished in hospital with his wrist and ankle fractured after crashing on rain-drenched roads in Brittany.

"It was a very small mistake but the consequences at 80kph were fairly drastic," said Boardman who lost 25 per cent of the mobility in his left ankle because of the spill, which put him out for three months.

"From a first-year professional to a team leader in the Tour the next year, people were just biting off more than I could chew. It's not because I was a Tour de France rider."

The Tour de France has received threats from the Basque separatist group, ETA, regarding the section of the race that goes through Basque country, around the Pyrenees. The Tour director, Jean-Marie Le Blanc, confirmed that he had received a letter from ETA last week containing what he called "veiled threats," but declined further comment.

I am the best man for the role. There is no one else. I am a team leader who has never finished a Tour.

"I wanted these things so I allowed myself to be pushed into these positions, and I did not have the attributes needed to do them. I was not comfortable with the role I had been given, so it was good to stop and take stock."

"There was a lot of pressure to do something in the prologue time trial. It wasn't nasty or malicious but for the 1995 prologue a lot of people were under pressure. It was coming out as encouragement. They were saying 'it's still possible, it's still possible'."

"When I am in a wound-up situation I want to do something, and they are shouting

you are only two seconds down and the corners are finished. It's still on."

"If someone was shouting 'take it easy... wait until the bottom', maybe I would not listen. It was my decision, but in that situation it doesn't need much encouragement when I wanted to do it."

"When I am not feeling so good, team helpers are saying 'I am sure you will be fine', and I am thinking 'I don't want to hear this'. They don't realise that they are doing it."

To avoid the "emotional rollercoaster", Boardman is looking for another prologue success. "It would take off the pressure and is also a certain amount of insurance which allows me to get on with the racing."

"I am slightly better at dealing with pressure now, and there has been a lot less this year because the team has had more results, and others have had their share of pressure."

A new burden was loaded on his French team, GAN, with the scandal about the team doctor, Patrick Nègre, prescribing steroids to two of their riders who were subsequently caught in a drug test.

"Our manager, Roger Legay, was totally destroyed because he picked a doctor who worked with the French cycling federation and the Union Cycliste Internationale [the world governing body]."

"Philippe Gaumont is only 23, and that guy could finish his career. It was not caffeine or testosterone where the point could be argued that you were making mistakes. This was clearly that they were taking something that was cheating."

"The doctor is arguing that it was therapeutic and given out of season. He has said that he should not have prescribed illegal substances but they were given because of the state they were in at the time."

"I was gobsmacked. From a selfish point I thought if I was a million miles away from it, it would still stick. Yet most of the team have been tested for doping at least 10 times this year."

"There is nothing we can do about it, but everyone is tarred with the same brush. If I was looking at it from the outside I would probably say: 'So that's why they are riding well'."

With that hanging over them the team hanging in the Dutch town of 's-Hertogenbosch with Boardman fully aware of the job ahead, having personally surveyed the Alps.

"Climbing the Galibier mountain is going to take two hours, and there are another two climbs after that. Physically and mentally, the hardest day is into Pamplona, 260 kilometres and five climbs. It is, however, Stage 16, and the end is in sight. That makes a difference."

Boardman's idea of "an acceptable Tour" would be victory in the prologue time trial, one good day in the mountains



Chris Boardman: 'I really would like to give people what they want'

Photograph: Allsport

Manjrekar returns with century

Cricket

Satish Manjrekar returned to action with a century for the Indian tourists against British Universities at Fenner's yesterday. Playing for the first time since damaging an ankle in the first Test against England, he made 101 in 138 balls as India scored 391 for 5.

"It's good to be back on the cricket field again and although the ankle is still weak, from now on it is a mental thing," said Manjrekar, who is expected to replace Ajay Jadeja in the third

Test at Trent Bridge next week. However, Jadeja may have complicated matters for the Indian selectors by scoring an unbeaten 95 from 108 balls.

The most spectacular batting of the day came from tour captain Mohammad Azharuddin, who cracked three huge sixes and seven fours in his 73. There was also a half-century for Vikram Rathore.

The Yorkshire captain, David Byas, is determined that his side will rekindle their County Championship hopes against Worcestershire at New Road today. But he knows that his

team, knocked off the top by Kent in the last round of matches, will have to improve against a Midlands side who, although third bottom, have hit their best form of the season.

"After losing to Leicestershire at Bradford where we did not play well, it is very important to get back to winning ways if we are to stay in touch with the leaders," said Byas, whose side now has an opportunity to climb back to the top of the table, because leaders Kent have no game this week.

"Although we are placed second we have played a match

more than most of our rivals so we must pick up points now."

He is helped by the fact that the home side are without their reliable seamer Phil Newport, who has a calf strain. The youngster Scott Ellis is in line for a debut. But the Worcestershire coach, David Houghton, remains optimistic: "We have worked hard to get into a winning role and it's important that we keep it going now."

Warwickshire are awaiting a fitness report on the England opener Nick Knight before finalising their squad for the game against Middlesex at Lord's.

Jarvis and Giddins lead rout of Ireland

Sussex 384-9
Ireland 80
Sussex win by 304 runs

Sussex humbled Ireland by 304 runs, completing their NatWest Trophy first-round victory in Belfast before a late lunch.

Sussex added 61 in their remaining five overs to compile their highest total in the competition. They then dismissed

Ireland for 80 in 33.3 overs.

Kyle McCallen was top scorer with 17 while Paul Jarvis and Ed Giddins each took three wickets. Ireland's misery started as early as the second ball of their innings when the captain, Justin Benson, who played in the 1992 final for Leicestershire, was caught at slip without scoring.

Jarvis, in a hostile opening spell, added the wickets of Andy Patterson and Angus Dunlop in

the space of four balls to reduce Ireland to 15 for 3, and he finished with 3 for 22.

When McCallen was leg before to Vebert Drakes in the 12th over, Ireland's débacle at Hove in 1985, when they were shot out for 39, looked like being repeated.

Two more wickets fell before they past that target, but it needed a ninth-wicket stand of 16 between the opening

bowlers, Ryan Eagleson and Mark Patterson, to take Ireland past their next lowest total of 71.

Giddins ended the partnership and, when Danny Law finished the innings in his second over, Eagleson was 15 not out.

At the start of the day, Ian Salisbury made 33, his highest score in the competition, and Derek Heasley took the wicket of Jarvis for two to finish with 4 for 66. Drakes was 30 not out.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

NatWest Trophy first round

United overs match

England v Sussex

England: Sussex beat England by 304 runs. Ireland won toss

Sussex

England: 323 for 7 from 55 overs

Ireland: 80 for 9 from 33.3 overs

England: 384 for 9 from 100 overs

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Other matches

Second day of NatWest Trophy

England v Somerset

England: Somerset beat England by 304 runs. Ireland won toss

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Dorado spells disaster for British women

Hockey

Natalia Dorado, Spain's captain, scored with three well-struck penalty corners to send Great Britain tumbling to a 3-1 defeat in Madrid yesterday - their worst defeat at the hands of the Olympic champions since they lost 5-1 in Santander in 1989 just prior to departure to the Seoul Olympics, writes Bill Colwell.

It was a disappointing result for their coach, Sue Slocombe, as the team completed their extended preparation programme of international matches prior to departure a week today to North Carolina for acclimatisation before moving to Atlanta.

Yesterday Britain pinned the Spanish into their own half for long periods without looking like scoring and it was not until the 67th minute that they won their only penalty corner, which Scotland's Sue Fraser converted.

Spain, fielding eight Olympic gold medalists, looked dangerous on the break and even more dangerous at set-pieces. Dorado scored from three of their six penalty corners.

Spain's attack was led by Natalia Dorado, who scored three of the six penalty corners. The British team, captained by Sue Slocombe, were unable to match the Spanish attack.

The match was played at the Palacio de Deportes de Madrid. Spain won 3-1. The British team were defeated 3-1.

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Gosling rivals American for world title

Sailing

An Anglo-American showdown for the Etchells 22 World Championship is in prospect for the last race in the Solent today, writes Stuart Alexander.

Squaring up at the Squadron Corral are Britain's Nigel Gosling, whose third consecutive second place yesterday put him into the overall lead, and the American Jud Smith. Smith, a runner-up at Newport Beach in 1994 who had led the series until yesterday's fifth race, came back from 21st at the first turning mark to finish seventh and is four points adrift. They are clear of the Australian Peter Conde in third place.

Both Loick Peyron, the defending champion, and his close rival, Paul Vatne, were expected to finish the Europe 1 Singlehanded Transatlantic Race from Plymouth to Newport, Rhode Island, inside the record time last night.

Italy's Giovanni Soldini leads the monomolds, with the Frenchman Gerry Roufs second and Britain's Pete Goss third.

Beerbaum's safe route to success

Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY reports from Aachen

Ludger Beerbaum had no need to hurry yesterday, when he cruised round the jump-off course to win the Preis von Europa with Sprehe Ratina on the second day of the Aachen Nations Cup Show.

The German Olympic champion was last to go in the jump-off and he had already seen John Whitaker make a single error on the final double when recording a record time on Grannusch.

"If John had been clear, I would have tried to beat his time," Beerbaum said. "I don't think there's a faster horse in the world than Ratina, but we might have had a fence down trying to be quicker." As it was, he had only two slow clear rounds to beat and (though 6.39sec slower than Whitaker) he gained an easy victory over Jos Lansink on Visa Carthago and Jerry Smit on Constantijn.

Whitaker finished fourth and Robert Smith, the only other

Speedway

Chris Manchesters, the overseas champion, has been stripped of his title and is one of 13 riders thrown out of this year's World Championship. The rebels have no right of appeal against the decision by the sport's world governing body, the FIM, which follows their strike action earlier this month. Joking Belle Vue's Manchester will be Jason Lyons, who has been named as the new champion. The rebels have no right of appeal against the decision by the sport's world governing body, the FIM, which follows their strike action earlier this month. Joking Belle Vue's Manchester will be Jason Lyons, who has been named as the new champion.

Other sports

Tennis: Wimbledon Championships.

Cricket: NatWest Trophy.

Hockey: British Women's.

Sailing: Etchells 22.

Equestrianism: Aachen.

Football: Scottish League.

Baseball: Major League.

Boxing: World Championship.

Swimming: Olympic.

Table Tennis: World Cup.

Volleyball: World Cup.

Weightlifting: World Cup.

Wrestling: World Cup.

Yachting: America's Cup.

Figure Skating: World Cup.

Artistic Gymnastics: World Cup.

Rhythmic Gymnastics: World Cup.

Trampoline: World Cup.

Acrobatics: World Cup.

Paralympics: World Cup.

Special Olympics: World Cup.

Winter Paralympics: World Cup.

Summer Paralympics: World Cup.

Winter Olympic Games: World Cup.

Summer Olympic Games: World Cup.

Winter Paralympic Games: World Cup.

Summer Paralympic Games: World Cup.

Winter Olympic Games: World Cup.

Summer Olympic Games: World Cup.

Winter Paralympic Games: World Cup.

Summer Paralympic Games: World Cup.

<

sport

A game that had everything



Wembley's unfolding night of drama (clockwise from top): Alan Shearer is quickest to the ball from England's first corner of the game after three minutes, the striker's header beating the German goalkeeper, Andreas Köpke; Mehmet Scholl (left) keeps his eyes on the ball as Paul Gascoigne closes on his opposite number; and Stefan Kuntz wheels away after scoring in the 16th minute to level the match, leaving Steve McManaman a troubled spectator

Photographs: Empics

EURO 96	
Semi-finals	
France	0 Czech Republic 0
43.277	(Czech Republic win 6-5 on penalties after extra time; at Old Trafford, yesterday)
Penalty shoot-out details	
France	Czech Republic
Zidare scored	Kabik scored
Digne scored	Hackd scored
Lizarri scored	Berg scored
Guerin scored	Pokorsky scored
Biere scored	Rade scored
Pedros saved	Kadic scored
England (1)	Germany (1)
Shearer 3	Kuntz 16
75.002	(Germany win 6-5 on penalties after extra time; at Wembley, yesterday)
Penalty shoot-out details	
England	Germany
Shearer scored	Haller scored
Pitt scored	Sturz scored
France scored	Reuter scored
Gascoigne scored	Zigge scored
Sherrington scored	Kuntz scored
Southgate saved	Möller scored
Final	
Czech Republic v Germany	
(at Wembley, 7.0, Sunday)	
Leading goalscorers	
FIVE GOALS: Shearer (England)	
THREE GOALS: Stokichov (Bulgaria), B. Lindberg (Denmark), Klavanen (Germany), Salvi (Czechia)	
TWO GOALS: Chalkhagh (Italy), Shakhmurov (England), Sauer (Germany)	
Discipline	
SUSPENDED FROM FINAL: Reuter, Möller (Germany)	

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SPORT



Monica Seles suffers surprise defeat
Luke Milligan bolsters British challenge



England's electric start: David Platt (No 7) watches in delight as Alan Shearer (No 9) turns away triumphantly after heading the host nation into a third-minute lead at Wembley last night

Photograph: Ross Kinnaird/Allsport

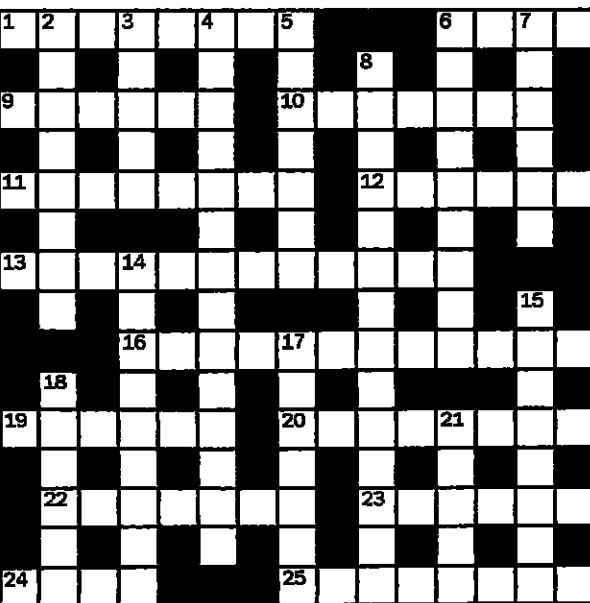
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By Phil

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R N H B I O I
U N S O C I A B L E
A W E D
S U N L I F E S A V E R
A L E P P E
A R A B I A N S A V E R S

- ACROSS**
- 1 Expert on board taking on head of directors came out on top (8)
 - 6 Prophet cut heart out (4)
 - 9 Spirit's telepathic power curtailed ceremony (6)
 - 10 Leaders of navy are ready with harpoons after locating this swimmer (7)
 - 11 One who'd wreck boat? Sure! (8)
 - 12 Doctor attending one wealthy family member (6)
 - 13 Favouring a harbour, island gets model finally on the appropriate scale (12)
 - 16 Second lad, dame-lorn, distraught, steps in the river (6,6)
 - 19 A certain sick playwright (6)
 - 20 Expected end of fall to tilt in fighter (8)
 - 22 One ship in twenty reduced in cut (7)
 - 23 Rig worker I left in Gulf state (6)
 - 24 Recalled some Fielding without making any effort (4)
 - 25 Edward's in charge in time? Give over! (8)
 - DOWN**
 - 2 Upper-class couples accepting the way to get to fight destination? (8)
 - 3 A long way to travel for an associate of Wells? (5)
 - 4 ...the locals cared about what's associated with Wells, perhaps (9,5)
 - 5 Coins one Arab country raised to cover half of debt (7)
 - 6 He cuddles naughtily, according to plan! (9)
 - 7 Intertwine ends of blue cotton on spikes (6)
 - 8 It may give detail of time past (8,6)
 - 14 Poison - drastic step that is bringing in the German side was released. Berti Vogts had chosen to flood the midfield, playing Steffen Freund instead of Oliver Bierhoff.
 - 17 Planned ring road went to watch for Andy Möller breaking through the centre as well Ziege and Stefan Reuter on the flanks. Platt and Paul Ince were in for a busy evening. Indeed, within the first minute Germany had sought to find Ziege on the attack but Darren Anderton, who appeared to have swapped flanks with Steve McManaman to deal with the threat, dealt with it.
 - 18 A Parisian thought to dismiss Monsieur that's not experienced (6)
 - 21 A vocation that involves one rearing a flower (5)

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Köpke save breaks England hearts

Six years on from a hot steamy night in Turin it came down to the agony of penalties once more. This time, it was a warm sticky night in north London but Germany again triumphed. The first 10 penalties were successful, but Gareth Southgate missed and Andy Möller did not.

If it was an unsatisfactory way to end the match, what had preceded it was arguably the most exciting football of the tournament. England had been given the perfect start when Alan Shearer headed in a well worked corner after two minutes. As ever, Germany refused to be bowed and they levelled after 16 minutes, Stefan Kuntz scoring his first goal for nearly two years.

Both managers had sought every advantage, putting up smokecreens and feeding the media red herrings. When they finally handed in their teams there was both surprise and confirmation. As expected, Jürgen Klinsmann was not fit, while Venables had not included Phil Neville, opting for the greater experience of David Platt and a three-man defence.

Terry Venables' decision risked exposing the right flank to Christian Ziege's attacking sorties but it seemed justified when the German side was released. Berti Vogts had chosen to flood the midfield, playing Steffen Freund instead of Oliver Bierhoff.

That meant England would have to watch for Andy Möller breaking through the centre as well Ziege and Stefan Reuter on the flanks. Platt and Paul Ince were in for a busy evening. Indeed, within the first minute Germany had sought to find Ziege on the attack but Darren Anderton, who appeared to have swapped flanks with Steve McManaman to deal with the threat, dealt with it.

England, roared on by a passionate crowd - which had whistled but not booed the German national anthem - responded. Stuart Pearce crossed deep from the left, Ziege headed out, and Ince fiercely volleyed from 25 yards, forcing

Glenn Moore reports from Wembley
England (1)1 Germany (1)1
Shearer 3 Kuntz 16 Att: 75,862
after extra time, Germany win 6-5 on penalties

Andreas Köpke to punch the ball over. Less than three minutes had been played as Paul Gascoigne jogged over to take the resulting corner. As he did so Shearer went to stand behind Teddy Sheringham, Markus Babbel was left marking both. As the corner dipped over Ziege to Tony Adams, Shearer, then 13 yards out, began his move. Adams' flick-on carried the ball over Matthias Sammer and, arriving unchallenged four yards from goal, was Shearer.

The rest was inevitable and the stadium - apart from one red, black and yellow segment - exploded with joy. "Three Lions" rang out and England charged into their opponents. A sterner referee might have booked Gascoigne as he clattered into Matthias Sammer - and Sheringham, who risked his second yellow card of the tournament with strong dissent.

Sandor Puhl, however, understood the nature of the occasion and made allowances. Bayern Munich's Mehmet Scholl, renewing Uefa Cup rivalry with Stuart Pearce, was similarly forgiven. The game then stepped up another

gear as Germany equalised. Möller, under pressure from Gascoigne on the edge of the England area, squeezed a reverse pass to Thomas Helmer on the left flank. As Gareth Southgate appealed for offside the big centre-half turned sweetly and drove the ball across goal. First to react was Kuntz, sliding in ahead of Pearce at the far post to score.

It was his first goal since 7 September 1994, the same day Shearer's infamous drought had started. This was Kuntz's 16th goal since and his delight was evident.

The goal stunned England, momentarily knocking the belief from them. Germany were able to stroll through midfield, forcing England to chase them. Eventually they reasserted themselves and Anderton began to make Ziege defend rather than vice-versa.

He sent in a deep cross with which Shearer could not make proper contact, then he fed Shearer on the wing only for the subsequent cross to go into an empty penalty area. Pressure brought another corner and, almost, another goal. In a move familiar to White Hart Lane

regulars Anderton pulled the ball back to Sheringham who, having found space, drove first time for goal. But barring the way was Reuter who cleaned off the line.

Two revved strikers, Shearer and Kuntz, both put ambitious efforts over the bar as the game swung this way and that. As the interval approached it nearly swung indigo blue as Anderton, having his best game of the tournament, crossed again and Shearer powered a header within a foot of the far post.

As the second half began unfolding Venables, a renowned interval tactician, appeared to have done the better job. There were no major changes but there did appear a greater emphasis on releasing McManaman. Within a minute he had an impact as Reuter checked him and received the first yellow card. The booking would have been a body blow to Reuter who knew, having been booked earlier in the tournament, that he would miss the final if Germany progressed.

There were no tears, but some uncertainty as McManaman again ran at him. The winger went by with ease but failed to stretch Köpke with the cross. Ince, driving forward, shot over but despite England's ascendancy, Germany could have gone ahead just before the hour.

The chance illustrated their versatility. Dieter Ellis, the defensive midfielder, broke to the left byline and Helmer, the centre-half, arrived late to meet his pull-back. However, he shot like a defender, spooning his effort over.

It proved a brief German sally as Gascoigne reprised his form of Italia '90 to weave and battle his way past three German defenders before producing a dangerous cross from the byline. Unfortunately for England the outstanding Ellis was there to clear.

As the tension increased Möller was booked - ruling him out of a possible final - for pretending Pearce had hit him. In extra time Anderton hit the post, Kuntz had a goal disallowed for pushing and Gascoigne was inches from touching home a Shearer cross. Then came the dramatic final act.

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